

ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

BY

THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Founder of the Woking Muslim Mission

THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION
AND LITERARY TRUST
THE MOSQUE, WOKING

First published in 1932

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

To
the memory of my beloved brother
Khwaja Jamal-ud-Din, B.A.,
Inspector of Education, Kashmir State, India,
who attended to my personal affairs at home
while I was away in England engaged
in the work of the Working Muslim
Mission. The success of the Mission
in its early difficult stages is
thus deeply indebted to him.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

that is to say, Muhammad and Jesus. One was a personification of Power, while the other was the incarnation of Love "Muhammad," said the Dean, "was sincere to the last, but he was clearly self-deceived, and his character when placed against the blameless Christ life seems to be very grey. And yet this is the idea of human life set up for the world of Islam. . . . Of course the true Christian is glad to see so much truth in Islam, and there is no doubt that Christendom, when it allowed itself to become unfaithful to its inheritance, had a good deal to learn from Islam; and yet we are persuaded that we have learnt from Our Lord Jesus Christ a higher conception of God and a higher ideal of human life and conduct than Muhammad has to offer. . . ."

In the end the Dean remarked that "Islam made less demand on character than did Christianity, therefore its rewards are not so great." "Muhammad cannot offer to his disciples anything comparable to the satisfaction of heart and mind or the dynamics of character which Jesus Christ offers to his."

Like many other members of his fraternity, the Dean of St. John's seems to possess very little first-hand knowledge of Islam. All his information on the subject seems to have been derived from the writings of those who, without scruple, fought against Islam somewhere towards the end of the Middle Ages, for political or religious reasons. Not only did they misinterpret and misread facts, but they made deliberate mis-statements also. They spoke of events in Islam which never occurred in the times of the Holy Prophet or after him. It is not of the misinterpretation or misreading of facts, but of deliberate misrepresentation that we complain of; and it was a few centuries afterwards, Renan, Gibbon, Carlyle, Lane-Poole, Draper, and others detected this gross injustice to Islam. They wrote with all the power at their command in defence of Islam, and exposed the scurrilous nature of its libellers. But at that time the Western nations were entering upon their "forward policy" of bringing the East into subjection. Missionary activity was found to be the most suitable method for attaining political ends, and the Missions, thinking that the old-time libels against Islam would be profitable for their

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

campaign, produced generations of Tisdalls, Zwemers, and others.

The Dean, however, seems somewhat of an exception to these people. He has some breadth of vision. He admits the excellences of others. His only shortcoming is that his information is all wrong. I hope that these pages, which he will find quite free from professional Missionary tactics, may help to correct his views on Islam.

I am also confirmed in my opinion as to the Dean's sources of information when I read of his disappointment at the religious indifference evinced by his own people at the beginning of last Lent. He saw then that the number of communicants was greatly reduced and said that matters were different in England, where every parish sent its crowds to church to receive the Holy Communion and spiritual instruction. His information as to the state of English parishes will seem to be as defective and inaccurate as his knowledge of Islam. If I might venture to undeceive Mr. Swan, I would tell him that the condition obtaining all over England in this matter, as well as in most Western countries, is worse than what he has found in the Far East. The vacant pews in the churches on Sundays bear eloquent witness that Western indifference to church religion has reached the frontier of disbelief in the Christian Dispensation. Perhaps the Dean did not read the stirring sermon of the Archbishop of York, in which His Grace stated that the Church *had become* repulsive to the public. The Bishop of London also said that there were forty-nine churches to which forty-nine persons went each Sunday, only to find congregations of four to seven, and not more than twelve in any. Canon Barrow, under the heading "Is English Christianity Dying?" wrote as follows in the *Evening News* (1923): "In this country Christianity is fighting for its existence and losing ground steadily. The Churches no longer influence Englishmen, and with the spread of education they are being deserted by the women." Christian religious edifices with a capacity for containing one hundred saw the number of worshippers reduced to something between thirty and forty in 1924, according to the reports of the local Commissioners in London on the sub-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

ject. Moreover, this decrease in the churchgoing class invited the attention of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, in his presidential address at the Bristol Congress in 1923, ascribed the phenomenon to sectarian differences in Christianity. In a very short time, however, the Archbishop had to change his opinion. At the next Congress he found fault with the clergy under his jurisdiction, who, he thought, did not take enough pains and "burn the midnight oil" to a sufficient extent to prepare sermons attractive enough for their congregations. But he forgot that official Christianity, as it stands, gives very scanty material for an honest man to make sermons on. The Church story is a very brief one: Adam committed sin which condemned his whole race to eternal perdition, but God the Father loved man so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son to redeem it. The Dean would, I am sure, agree with this summing up of Christianity. He himself, unfortunately, evinced the same paucity of ideas in his Lenten Sermon for the same reason. His first sermon takes the same Love of God as the pivot for all that he has said in the various graceful trappings of a pulpit speaker. If I denude his sermon of those trappings there will remain about two lines only to sum up his whole religion. He may himself realize that such a story may be pleasing to infant ears, but yet incapable of inspiring any intelligent listener.

But other factors have come to light in these days which have alienated the Church in the West from her former adherents. The Woking Mission literature, followed by a flood of writing from the Modernists' camp, opened the eyes of the churchgoing population of these islands to the genesis of their religion. The literature has remained unchallenged so far as research work goes, though the Church Press took serious notice of it. Official Christianity has been found to emanate from the cult of Mithraism, and not from the religion of Jesus. Most of the laity now consider it an insult to their intelligence to hold their former beliefs. They have realized that the Church story of Christianity, from beginning to end, was only a faithful reproduction of the stories of several pagan gods; that the original narrative of Jesus was purposely lost

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

sight of by the Early Church Fathers, who portrayed the Lord of Christianity purely from the pagan point of view; that they depicted him as the last of the generation of Pagan Christs who were reported to have been born of a Virgin on Christmas night; that they all came, in their respective periods of history, to redeem the condemned human race by their blood, and willingly went to the Cross or were killed on the Friday afternoon immediately preceding Easter Sunday. It has also been established that all these pagan gods were buried and remained for two days in the grave; they rose again on the Easter Sunday morning and ascended to heaven afterwards, with a promise of a second coming in the latter days; and that the pagans used to participate in meals on Sunday in commemoration of their crucified god, believing that they ate his blood and flesh. It has also come to light that, thousands of years before the birth of Jesus, the Egyptians used to worship the Cross on Easter Sunday as a sign of the new Lord, and ate eggs and hot-cross buns, like the Catholics of to-day, at the season when their Lord, they believed, used to give new life to the earth. These are the beliefs of the Church. Besides Easter and Christmas, the pagans celebrated all the festivals which are now observed by the Romish Church. Most of the pagan gods, it is proved, had twelve disciples, and they were destroyed by one of their number. The various names given to Jesus were also the names of those gods. To their great discomfiture, churchgoers have discovered that the cathedrals of the Roman Church are only a replica of buildings consecrated to the worship of Apollo, the Sun-god. The Holy water, the vestry, the position of the altar facing east, the choirs, the acolytes, the monks and the nuns with tonsures in commemoration of the Sun's disc—all come from the same Church of Apollo. It has also been established that Sunday was not God's day but the Roman *Dies Soli*, the day reserved for the worship of the Sun-god. It was to serve his political ends that Constantine placed Jesus on the altar of Apollo, in the fourth century, while retaining every other vestige of pagan worship, and incorporating it into the Church of Jesus. Last of all, and not the least, it has been found that Jesus was not born

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

on the 25th of December, but it was the birthday of the Sun as popularly believed in pagan circles. Churchgoers have now found out that they have for centuries been not worshipping Jesus, but the Sun; and the respectable orthodox Christian now thinks himself justified if he spends his Sundays in golf, cricket, or any other sport instead of attending Divine worship. Can a man with any sense of self-respect go to receive Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday or any Sunday if he feels that all the rites of the Sacrament are the same as those observed by the pagans in commemoration of their respective deities who were wrongly believed to have given their lives to save humanity? Justin Martyr was forced to admit that the so-called Christian rites had existed among the pagans centuries before Jesus. Justin was asked by the then Emperor of Rome to explain why he should embrace Christianity and give up his ancestors' faith if the various articles of his own faith in the Mithraic Dispensation were the same as those in the new cult called after the name of Christ. Mithra, the Emperor thought, was the origin of Christ. Justin could not deny the fact. His explanation, however, is very interesting, as we read in his *Apologia*. He said that centuries before, Satan went to the higher regions in heaven and overheard angels rejoicing over the appearance of Jesus Christ in the days to come. Satan thus came to be acquainted with all the features of the story of the coming Christ, and he, being the arch-enemy of truth, tried, therefore, to confound it with falsehood. He visited numerous countries, from Persia to England, and all those that surrounded the birthplace of Jesus, and introduced cults each of which had the same story of its god as is now told of Jesus by the Church. Though the ingenious story of Justin could not convince the Emperor, it nevertheless explained the difficulties attaching to the new faith to its followers, and was accepted as the truth by Constantine for purely political reasons.

The simple religion of Jesus, which was no other than the religion of Moses with certain minor modifications, became completely Romanized to suit the tastes of the Gentiles. If these facts have now come to light and are fully established,

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

the desertion of the Church by its former votaries in the West is but a natural sequence. Formal Christianity has collapsed. Its days are numbered. Its adherents have become divided into innumerable new sects—Spiritualism, New Thought, Christian Science, and the like—each of whom has all but denied the teachings of the Church and has adopted beliefs which, generally speaking, are of Islamic origin.

Dean Swan must be aware of this pagan story. The Church asserts that the Mystery Cult in different forms of Paganism was a deception and that the Lord of Christianity came to destroy it and uproot the falsehood from the world for ever. We Muslims do admit that Jesus, as a true Messenger of God, did come to destroy falsehood. He preached against it when he laid emphasis on obedience to the laws of God—His teachings were diametrically opposed to the pagan religion of the Sacrament, which dispensed with the Law and promised absolution from punishment for disobedience thereto for all who believed and participated in the Sacred Feasts. In fact, the chief feature of Paganism was participation in the Sacred Feasts. But Jesus demanded the fulfilment of the Law. The teachings of Jesus thus stood poles apart from Paganism, which summed up the religions of the Gentiles. Jesus really came to demolish it, but the coming generation of his followers, with the author of the Pauline literature at their head, who decidedly was not St. Paul but some Greek Father in the Church, succumbed to the wishes of the Gentiles, who hated the religion of the Law and its observance. Epicurean as many of the Gentiles were in all their ways, they could not abide by the strict laws of the Mosaic Dispensation, as Jesus exhorted his followers to do. They believed in a cult that cleansed them of all sin by simple belief. They followed a persuasion which gave them, as it were, a blank cheque on any bank of evil and indecency, while saving their skin from the punishment which would otherwise be incurred. They preferred to place all responsibility on the shoulders of another. Pagan ingenuity had grasped the situation and found the solution of the problem in the cult of mystery under which various virgins gave birth to gods who died on Good Fridays

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

to relieve people from the burden of sin. Mithra, Apollo, Baal, Adonis, Horus, Osiris, Bacchus, Quetzacoatl, were the various incarnations of those virgin-born sun-gods. We read of Bacchus that sages approached Jupiter and solicited him to ward off the destruction that must fall on humanity in order to punish them for their sins. Jupiter promised to do so. He descended to the earth in a cloud which enveloped a virgin, who at once became pregnant of a god-child. The god-child was born on the 25th of December and received the name of Bacchus. When the new god grew older he proclaimed that he had come to deliver humanity and redeem it from punishment through his blood. It was Bacchus, and not Jesus, who for the first time said that he was "the Alpha and the Omega of the world" and would give his life to regenerate the human race, of which he also said that he was the Redeemer and Deliverer. He died on Friday and rose again on Easter Sunday and ascended to heaven. There is only one point of difference between the pagan gods and Christ. While the other redeemers of humanity willingly went to suffer death for mankind, since they had come to earth for this very purpose, Jesus Christ wished to evade the cup which he had to drink. He did not want to be crucified and would have been absent from the scene at Calvary if he could have done so. But he was in the clutches of implacable foes and was forced to drink the cup to the dregs. He came to the Cross with a heart full of sorrow. As the Bible says: "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: *nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*" The italics in the above show rather a forced consent than a willing one—a heart compelled to resign itself to fate, when no alternative is left, rather than a heart that welcomes the work which the Father has given him to finish. This alone is sufficient to falsify the supposed scheme of God to save the human race. As a matter of fact, no sooner had Jesus descended alive from the Cross and recovered than he left Judæa for good.

The Dean should not feel disappointed at the apathy and

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

indifference of the people in Hong Kong, seeing that the Church is "repulsive" everywhere, as the Archbishop of York has said. This apathy is not the outcome of self-indulgence or the devotion of his "flock" to worldly affairs, as he thinks, but it is the Church itself that has excited revolt against itself among its worshippers, who think their intelligence has been insulted by being taught to worship the Sun-god under the name of Jesus, and who are determined no more to embrace Paganism in the guise of Christianity.

It is true that all the pagan deities were creatures of imagination, while Jesus was a real personality. But all we know of any man depends on the character which is his; otherwise all people, for practical purposes, are imaginary beings. It is a man's character which gives him individuality. Millions and trillions of people come and go in each generation. They pass unnoticed, and no one remembers them after they have gone. They are taken as denizens of an imaginary world. But if they possess some distinctive character they are treated by the generations to come as actual men. Even persons created by the poetical imagination to personify the types of character have come to be regarded almost as real characters and receive more attention from us than do those who have actually existed. Ulysses, Macbeth, and Shylock, for instance, have become in a sense historic and have a greater claim to our notice than tens of thousands of Dicks, Toms, and Harrys of every time and clime. Character, then, is the factor which confers immortality on mortal men. As Jesus had been to some extent clothed in the garb of mythology, his historical existence has been denied by many learned savants in the West. If we strip him of the garments filched from the pagan cupboard, he cannot claim to be an historical character. The same may be said of the Jesus of the Gospels, which are admittedly not genuine in origin. We Muslims, however, are bound to accept him as a real entity because the Holy Qur-án speaks of him as a prophet; otherwise I, for one, see no reason why a Muslim should believe in his existence at all. Under these circumstances, we are bound to divest him of all pagan disguise and give him the character accorded to him by the Muslim scriptures. I cannot understand why we should

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

reverence Jesus as he is represented by the Church, when all that is told of him has been rightly traced to mythology.

The best that can be said of the matter is that the theory of Redemption, as taught by official Christianity, was very much to the taste of pagans, who would prefer to see their god carrying their sins and relieving them of the bother of being righteous. It is true that every man is an easygoing person. He wishes to be free from hardship and tries to get as much enjoyment out of life as possible without doing anything; while righteousness is uphill work. Man would not attempt it, as the Holy Qur-án says, if he could get the same result by going downhill (xc. 11). All dirty things are easily come by. It is not strange, therefore, if pagan ingenuity devised a scheme of redemption that helped a man to save his skin and dodge the hardship of righteousness. But God's ways are unchangeable, and He has proposed a different method by which we are to achieve success and happiness in this life. It is not a soft bed for us to lie on, but a thorny path for us to tread, if we are to reach the goal. Every one of us must bear his own cross while no one bears the burden that is another's. It is hard living that brings prosperity. This truth was revealed to us in the following mighty words of the Qur-án: "That no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another." "And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for." "And that his striving shall soon be seen." "Then shall he be rewarded with the fullest reward" (liii. 38-41). Again the Book says: "Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another" (xvii. 15).

This statement is in accordance with the laws of Nature and strikes at the very root of the doctrine of Atonement which finds no parallel in the whole working of the Universe. This life of ours is admittedly of brief duration. If God has been pleased to send hardships and trials as necessary concomitants to happiness and success, how could He allow happiness to be acquired by mere belief in salvation by the Blood of Christ, or by participation in the Sacrament?

CHAPTER II

ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTIONS
OF GOD

POWER AND LOVE

“THE conception of Godhood in Islam, which is that of Power, cannot come up to the Christian conception, where God is Love.” This is the basis of the sermon under discussion in these pages. The idea is but a re-echo of what is repeatedly heard from Christian platforms whenever any attempt is made to compare Christianity with Islam. The subject is not without interest, and may be approached from various angles—theological, philosophical, and logical. The most important among these is the historical aspect. The Christian idea has a certain sentimental beauty; but logical difficulties in the way of its acceptance immediately arise, especially when viewed from the practical side of life, and in the light of actual events.

I should like to deal with the historical aspect of the case as a natural sequel to what I have already said. The Dean, in common with other writers on the subject, admits a fallacy into his argument. Such writers start with the assumption of facts which need proof. They beg the question; with all possible academical gowns on their shoulders they commit the common error of *petitio principii*. The new Epiphany whereof the Church boasts depends entirely on the occurrence of the following facts. God was born of a Virgin so that He might be crucified on Calvary in order to save humanity from perdition by thus paying the penalty for their sins with His own life. He did it willingly, out of His love for humanity. I will deal later on with the reasonableness of such an assumption. But the first question to be considered is this: Did ever such an event occur in history? I have already shown that the story owes its origin to pagan imagination and was incorporated with Christianity by the Early Fathers of the Church. Jesus, as pictured by the Evangelical record, is a personality quite distinct from that portrayed in the literature passing under the name of St. Paul. We find nothing in the

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

former picture to substantiate this uncommon conception of Divine Love. Jesus never spoke of it in his lifetime. Nay, he preached precisely the opposite.

He made righteous dealing and obedience to the Law the only passport to heaven.¹ If he had, indeed, come to save humanity by his blood—thus obviating the necessity for good deeds, as Luther argues—he would have proclaimed that Gospel himself to the world. Throughout the course of his ministry he seems to know nothing of this Redemption, though the Synoptic record speaks of his being tried for sedition by a Roman judge who was induced by the Jews to sentence him to crucifixion. Though almost all features of the trial story are derived from the passion story of Baal—one of the virgin-born sun-gods—yet it establishes only one fact: that a righteous person was wrongly tried for sedition and hanged for it. Such events are not of infrequent occurrence. Many innocent people are wrongly tried for sedition and put to death. Do they all atone for someone's sins? If not, how does the case of Jesus vary from that of other innocents who were victims of persecution? Jesus said nothing about his coming to bear our sins, or about his trial and persecution taking place as a manifestation of Divine Love. His behaviour in the Garden before his arrest shows that he had heard of what was coming. He tried to evade it, and with that end in view withdrew into the Garden to conceal himself. He told his disciples to keep watch and thus help him against his enemies. Many a time he fell on the ground and prayed God to save him from the impending fate. How, in the light of these events, can we conclude that God willingly came in His Own Person to suffer death, so that He might give expression to His peculiar Love for humanity? We read, of course, in the Bible that when celebrating the last Passover Jesus said that the bread and wine of the feast were his body and blood for the New Dispensation. But it should not be forgotten that the Gospel writings are not genuine and cannot be relied on *in toto*. It has also been established that these scriptures were written in the second century, or afterwards when the Church of Jesus was in the

¹ St. Matt. xix. 16-22.

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

pagan melting-pot. We also know that the Feast of the Passover was not established by Moses at the Divine Command, but was merely a thing of pagan origin, celebrated by the heathen to commemorate the sun's crossing of the equator, which ushers in Easter (or Spring, which it literally means) and gives new life to the earth. It is also clear that all that is reported as having been done at the Last Supper was only a repetition of the pagan Eucharistic Feast. It is a blasphemy to think of Jesus observing a pagan festival. I admit that such a festival had already made its way into his tribe, but even then the words used by Jesus do not suggest that he was going to be slain for the salvation of mankind. He was Eastern. He spoke in an Eastern language, a language which is full of similes. He knew, from the history of the prophets, that all reformers and teachers of a new dispensation suffered physical persecution. They had established the truth that the tree of Reformation has always needed human blood for its sustenance and that martyrdom furthers the cause of a true religion. As a Prophet of God, Jesus foresaw all that was likely to happen to him, seeing that, in his case, the atmosphere around him was full of trouble. He knew that his own tribe had been heartless enough to put many a prophet to death before him. If such events have often been reported in sacred history there was nothing peculiar in the remark that Jesus made on the occasion of the Passover Feast if he observed it at all. The most surprising thing of all is the fact that, when he came out of the tomb, he did not refer to his death as a penalty for other's sins. We read very little of what occurred after the supposed Resurrection. St. Matthew was doubtful about the event, and the only description of it which we find in the Bible is given in the last ten lines of St. Mark. But these are admittedly a forgery, being neither in the Vulgate nor in the original Greek text, as pointed out in a marginal note by the first English translators of the Bible. But accepting them as they are, even they do not hint that the death of the Master was by way of atonement for the sins of mankind. Is it not a surprising thing that the very personage who achieved this work of redemption and was the instrument for bringing this

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

new revelation of Divine Love upon the earth remains absolutely silent on the subject? We read of the Redemption theory in the Pauline literature. But the story is there told by a writer who could not quote Jesus in support of his assertion. He bases his argument on the theory of the Fall of Adam. But the Fall was not referred to by Jesus himself, nor do we find any allusion to it in any Jewish scripture; it was invented to fit the Redemption stories of the heathen gods with which the pagan literature is teeming. The Christian passion story has recently been discovered to be the same passion story as that enacted in a popular mystic drama. There are two Babylonian tablets, says the *Quest*, appertaining to documents discovered by the German excavators in 1903-1904, at Kala Shar Gate, the site of the ancient Ashur. They belonged to a library at Ashur, which was founded in the ninth century B.C. The tablets disclosed astounding facts. The two stories, the story of Jesus and the story of Baal, are one and the same. It, therefore, not only deprives the Evangelical record of any claim to be genuine, but also represents them as a complete plagiarism. If the facts, which are necessary to establish this peculiar revelation of God's Love, are decidedly of heathen origin, with very little in the Bible to support them, and if the Biblical record is admittedly folk-lore, then the Dean of St. John's and his fraternity are talking of a thing which never happened in history. They, as I said before, start to theorize on an assumption of facts that lack proof.

Now I will look at the case psychologically. To make a virtue of necessity is a common thing, but to create a new logic to serve some necessity, and thus to make a departure from the established order of things in metaphysics, is only to abuse the laws of learning. Love and Power, for instance, should not be regarded as antithetical, the one to the other, as the Church has always tried to represent them when comparing Islam with Christianity. A Muslim theologian is not so ignorant as to commit this fallacy, especially when Love is only a substantive and principal quality, while Power is auxiliary in all its functions. If it be the function of Power to serve the ends of Love, how can they be opposed to each

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

other? The love of justice induces us to defend the helpless and innocent against tyranny. The love of helping others incites us to generosity. The love of truth prompts us to expose a liar, a proceeding which often requires moral courage. All these manifestations of Love and its several other forms necessitate the possession of power by him who indulges in this noble passion. If we cannot understand the manifestation of Divine Love which is supposed to have occurred at Calvary, it is not only because it seems to indicate want of Power on the part of God, but also because it is inconsistent with our notions of Godhood. It is derogatory to Divine dignity, especially when we believe that God could fulfil His object—the deliverance of the wicked race—in some honourable way. But the Dean is of opinion that God's action of Calvary manifests His power of suffering and of sacrifice. No doubt it is a noble example of sacrifice to give one's life to save that of others; but sacrifice, in itself, comes into play when its maker has been left no other alternative. If he has more dignified means at his command for the working out of his design, and yet prefers to meet a despicable fate instead of having recourse to them, it would show a niggardly spirit rather than one of sacrifice. Sacrifice, in the last resort, means exhaustion, and the absence of any other means to save the situation. It is unbecoming and even blasphemous to think of such poverty of resource in the case of God. If He could save sinful humanity and regenerate them by other means, why should He stoop to such undignified methods, especially when the whole plan itself is going to fail in bringing true moral regeneration to mankind? It is interesting to note here that I do not find sacrifice in the list of the Qur-ānic names of God. It is, no doubt, a morality of the highest order, and the basis of various other high qualities, such as bravery, generosity, charity, and the like; but meritorious as it is in the case of man, it is not so in the case of God. If a man, who has, say, a thousand pounds, spends a hundred shillings in charity, it will not mean any great degree of sacrifice on his part. But it would be the highest sacrifice if a man who had ten pounds gave it all away in charity. The idea of parting with some-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

thing one's very own is a necessary constituent of the idea of sacrifice. If God gives us anything, He loses nothing. Sacrifice means loss. Therefore, it is improper to suppose that God Himself should possess the quality of sacrifice, though to create an example for others He may raise up some godly man for that purpose. Herein lies the difference between patience and sacrifice—a difference which is often overlooked by Church theologians. Divine government may suffer a breach of its laws, but the Moral Ruler loses nothing by it, so it is not His sacrifice but rather a species of device (if the word be permitted) for the furtherance of the Divine Plan. The sinner is not punished at the moment of his sin because he may yet repent, and for this reason God can most rightly be invested with the attribute of Patience, but not of Sacrifice, and so do we find it in the Qur-án. ﴿٢٧﴾

To render the position tenable, the Church must needs resort to a queer sort of logic. It is argued that the grace of the Lord, which includes also the forgiveness of sin, cannot be granted without some compensation, and that a sinner cannot be forgiven until the penalty for his sins has been paid, which is also necessary if justice is to be done. This Church logic discloses a number of fallacies. It involves the assumption of the proposition that God cannot show His grace without a price being paid therefor. On the other hand, if He could do so there would be no necessity for any atonement, and the whole theory of atonement would fall to the ground. Church theology is purely dogmatic, and entirely unsupported by natural theology. All Nature gives the lie to it. Millions of things necessary for our life here on earth, as well as in the hereafter, were given to us without our deserving them. They were not given by way of compensation for any action of ours, seeing that they came into being millions of years before man was created. All things in heaven and earth are a necessity; we cannot live for a minute if one single component part (however slight) of the universe is eliminated, and all these existed before man's appearance on the scene. This, the Grace of God, was manifested without any demand for compensation from us. To allow an evil race to enjoy a life of bliss would

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

be another instance of the Grace of God. If He, with all His knowledge of our coming misdeeds, had been gracious enough to give us the means of happiness without exacting therefor any price in this life, nothing could prevent Him from doing the same thing when we die. Why then assume a compromising position for our Lord, if the situation could have been saved without bringing Him to the indignity which He is supposed to have suffered at Calvary?

The Church, in this connection, would refer to the Divine sense of justice. The clergy would argue that the ends of justice demand punishment. But as the Love of God wanted to save humanity, justice became reconciled with His Love when He suffered His own death on the Cross. This, the half-Apostolic logic of Pauline literature, only betrays ignorance on the part of the clergy of the theory of criminal liability. A sense of justice must be respected in the judge when he has to decide between the rights of two parties—the wrong-doer and the sufferer. The judge must punish the culprit if he is to satisfy the demands of justice. But there is no occasion for this when the dispute lies between an offender and the judge himself. If the judge forgives an offender for his wrong to another person, without the consent of that person, it is sheer injustice. But if he forgives the sinner for a wrong against himself, it is no violation of justice but an act of true mercy. This is what is meant in the Lord's Prayer when Jesus said, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (St. Matt. vi. 12). Here he said nothing in any way unintelligible, but simply referred to common practice. If we forgive our debtors, we do so by remitting the debt. We never go through the farce of paying them something out of our own pocket and then asking them to return it to us by way of payment. Where is the necessity for such a novel method of "give and take" when by simply saying that we remit the debt we absolve the debtors from all liability. It may, perhaps, seem presumptuous on the part of Jesus to enlighten the Lord in this respect. Yet it is not so. The prayer seems to me to be a revealed one and the author of it—the Most High—inserted the sentence in order to warn the

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Church that was to come against belief in the theory that the Lord would not show His Mercy without price. The whole Church theory in this respect falls to the ground, since it is undoubtedly curious that Christian people should ask God, night and morning, to remit their sins without penalty, and yet entertain beliefs flatly contradicting the spirit of the prayer.

There is yet another thing to be considered. Belief in salvation by the Blood of Christ might be accepted as the specific means for regeneration, were it able to kill the disease of sin. Had our participation in the Eucharist transmuted the base metal in us, making us morally regenerated after eating the body and drinking the blood of the Lord, we should certainly have believed in it. But a churchgoer leaves the precincts of the church with the same sinful nature with which he entered it and partook of the Holy Meal. The Lord's Supper has indeed actually increased sin, instead of acting as a charm against it. Christianity is the only religion in the world which can boast of creating more criminals among its ministers or clergy than any other creed, and all this through the doctrine of Atonement which is given a new revelation under tasteful ecclesiastical trappings. The Rev. Mr. —, once incumbent of a well-known church in Lahore, India, pleaded his faith in the Atonement as his defence when charged with misconduct, he having been caught red-handed. But the subject is too painful for me to pursue. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

To return to the psychological aspect of the case, I would say again that Power and Love are in no sense antagonistic. Love, in itself, has its merits and demerits, and we cannot speak of it in a detached sense when speaking of God or use the term in its popular sense. Love, in its worse aspects, begets whoredom, fornication, and illegitimacy. The love of money is responsible for numberless crimes. Theft, cheating, misappropriation, forgery, are different manifestations of the evil wrought by an inordinate love of money. Avarice, cupidity, niggardliness come under the same category. Nevertheless, Love has also its beautiful phases—beneficence, benevolence, compassion, mercy, sympathy, fellow-feeling, devotion

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

to the children—which come into existence when Love gets fair play within legitimate and desirable limits. How then can we speak lightly of Love and even of Power as Divine Attributes when they change in their quality according to circumstances? They, no doubt, are the strongest bulwarks of theology. When appearing in their highest form they belong to God. But before we say “God is Love,” we must be quite clear about the nature of the Love which we believe pertains to God. The Holy Qur-án, therefore, does not give us any derivative of the word “hubb” (the Arabic equivalent of the English word “love”) when speaking of the Divine Attributes, though the sacred list gives many names which include Love in its best and highest aspects. They refer to all that constitutes Love in its most desirable sense, ignoring all conceptions and phases of Love which tend to encourage inordinacy and evil, or are incompatible with Divine grandeur.

Before I deal with this part of the subject, it is necessary to establish a *criterion* whereby to test Love in its worthiest forms, for it is indeed a poor sort of logic that would attempt to prove its case by relying on statements or assumptions which our opponents do not admit as facts. It would be the fallacy of *petitio principii* over again. For example, to remove the slur cast by the story of the crucifixion on Divine Majesty, the Church at once speaks of a Divine Love which had to be revealed. But when the Church is asked for proof of the so-called Divine Love they refer us to the crucifixion of Jesus, and where can we find a worse example of the vicious circle? How can we accept the crucifixion of Jesus in proof of it, without believing in his divinity? It should be proved in itself, as every proposition should be, by independent evidence; otherwise we get back to our vicious circle again.

It is a matter for rejoicing that science has given us a most reliable method whereby to test the truth of the various theological concepts. God has come now within the scope of scientific research. His existence has been established; but this happy event has also shaken the foundations of all religions and theologies that did not derive their source from the Most High. Scientific observation has found its own theology,

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

which may be named Natural Theology. We find Intellect, Design, Propriety, Precision, and Precaution in the working of Nature. We find that the Maker of Nature possesses Compassion, Liberality, Benevolence, Beneficence, Purity, and Justice. He appears as the Maker of laws, yet is Himself observant of His own Laws. He is jealous of His Laws and sometimes inexorable in punishing those who transgress them, but forgiveness and the remission of offence are also His Prerogative. There is no mediation with Him. His blessings are open to every living person. Lip-service is of no avail with Him, but they are amply rewarded who translate their belief into action. The Creator of Nature is our best Exemplar, and if we follow His ways we become successful in every walk of life. He is Bountiful, but there seems to be no sacrifice in this on His part, since He does not appear to be in the need of it. These and numberless other truths have been writ large on every page of Nature, which has been rightly styled, in the Qur-án, the Open Book of God. If we had been able to study and master it, as the Holy Qur-án urges us to do, there would have been no necessity for any revelation from on high. But history shows that man cannot interpret Nature's Book without Divine aid, and hence the necessity of Divine Revelation. The Book of Nature is, therefore, the most reliable criterion wherewith to test the respective claims of the various beliefs. These are not the days of miracles, and if there had been any Worker of Miracles, His work would have been set at naught by science, just as most of the miracles mentioned in ancient scriptures have been proved to be either folk-lore or performed through the knowledge of some secret of Nature unknown to the world at large at the time. The only means whereby a religion can prove its truth is the testimony that it may receive from Nature in its support, be it Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or any other creed. It cannot command any allegiance from intellectually advanced people if its verities are not confirmed by Nature. If this part of my treatise is agreeable to the Dean, he will at once discover why it is that a Muslim does not see his way to accept the Church tenets. There are many points of agreement between Christianity and Islam, but

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

wherever there is a difference, Nature stands on the side of Islam. The Christian Catechism, therefore, needs amendment. It should try to establish the Church verities in the light of Nature, and then to approach Muslims; otherwise foreign Missions will continue, as hitherto, to meet with failure in Muslim countries. Similarly, let us refer the matter in dispute to the judgment of Natural Theology and see if there is even a tittle of evidence in the whole of Nature which exhibits the peculiar aspect of Love alleged to have been responsible for Calvary.

We may be mistaken in our reading of Nature, but we candidly admit that we find no proof whatever of the Church's theory of the working of God. The Muslim mind has been trained by the Qur-án to form its own unbiased opinion. The Holy Book appeals to Nature repeatedly in support of its tenets, and has established this principle for the thinking mind, that it must first perceive similarity between the work and the Word of God before accepting the latter, if it lays down any unintelligible doctrine. On these grounds of reasoning, we are unable to entertain the Church conception of Divine Love. To us, it is quite untenable. But we should be prepared to accept it if the Dean could discover any manifestation of Nature, whereby it might be corroborated. This leads me to yet another aspect of the subject. Let us see how the Love of God, in general, has been revealed. We find the following features to be noted in His Work. The Creator of Nature is also the Nourisher and Maintainer. Everything in creation finds means to satisfy its needs. He is not partial in this respect. So far, His Love may be compared with that of a father, but we find something else which is beyond the power of a father to show or even possess. God, of His special Love for His creatures, reposes wonderful and high capabilities in everything, then He brings it to perfection, arranging for its sustenance in every stage of its development. In modern scientific phraseology, He works on the principle of evolution, and for brevity's sake I would call Him the evolver of everything in Nature.

Jesus did not make a happy choice of the word when he

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

called Jehovah the Father, though it suited the time, since the Jews regarded God as an inexorable punisher of sinners. The expression, however, was not only not comprehensive, but in some way defective. There are many fathers who, like those in the animal world, have no care for children, especially when they have passed the age of minority. Besides, conception of fatherly love by many children who lose their mothers while their fathers marry again is not a happy one. The second phase of His love is His provision for all His creatures of that which they need for their subsistence and development. This He has supplied of His own goodness and not as a reward for anything; indeed, the necessary means of sustenance were created by Him long before any necessity for them appeared. Thirdly, in order to infuse into us a spirit of activity and exertion He seems to reward any good action manifold; we sow a seed and reap a harvest. Fourthly, His love seeks to bring us to perfection—to bring all our faculties to their full and perfect fruition. He is so watchful that if He finds any of His creatures going astray and in danger of bringing the Divine scheme to nothing He adopts disciplinary measures for their correction. There is no revenge on His part. Whenever we break the laws He forgives us. He allows us to mend our ways, but when His further forgiveness would increase stubbornness in us He adopts harsh measures, popularly termed punishment, for His creature's good. But His punishment is only His Love displayed in a harsh form. It comes to us for our own benefit, like the punishment an earthly father would mete out to the child he loves, and it is very wholesome in its effects.

These four aspects of Love are clearly visible in Nature, and I think that the Dean will agree to them, with the exception of the fourth, and that because it does not tally with his belief in the sacrifice at Calvary. He should be pleased to know that the Qur-án opens with four Attributes of God which literally signify the four aspects of Love which I have shown working in Nature, for the revealed theology in the Qur-án faithfully corresponds with Natural Theology. On further study of the Qur-án, he would find that the four

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

said Attributes of God have rightly been styled by Islam the mother of all other Attributes given in the Book. The remaining ninety-six of the Holy Names of God are only illustrative of these four Names—Rabb, Rahmān, Rahīm, and Mālik-i-Yaumiddīn. Can the Dean discover any trace of the conception which he thinks Islam entertains concerning God in these Attributes? They sum up the whole Muslim conception of Godhood. They are all different forms of Love, and the noblest forms too. There is no sign of harshness in the first three. But even the harshness which is alluded to in the fourth Attribute has Love for its motive—that is to say, it corrects us when no other alternative is left. In this connection the doctrine of repentance as set forth in the Qur-ān (vii. 156) may be referred to with advantage. It is clearly laid down in the Book that the mercy of God encompasses everything, and that no sooner does a sinner return to God than he is received into the merciful arms of the Most Compassionate. The Qur-ānic word for “repentance” is “tauba,” which literally means “returning” or “coming back.” God has, also, in this respect, been named “At-Tawwāb”—“The Oft-Returner.” This word usually takes Ar-Rahīm as its adjective, which conveys the idea that God is oft-returning with mercy and returns to him who forsakes a life of inordinancy. The Prophet says that if such a one comes to God, a yard only, God will come to him a hundred. When the prodigal son, after wasting all his substance, returns to the Heavenly Father, He comes to welcome him a hundred times. The Dean will see in the parable of Jesus only an illustration of the Qur-ānic Divine Attribute “Tawwābu ’r-Rahīm,” i.e. “He Who often returns to His Mercy.” The disciples of Jesus were mostly ignorant men, who could not understand ideas in the abstract, and the Master, at their request, had to explain to them religious truth by means of parables. They were unable to appreciate this Qur-ānic conception of God, therefore Jesus explained it to them in the parable of the prodigal son. But unfortunately the Gentle Philosopher of Nazareth would find another difficulty in the ranks of present-day Christians, though some of them are eminent scholars. They force an

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

interpretation of the parable which he never meant. Had the Master related that the father of the prodigal son went in search of him and found him given to all kinds of wickedness, and unwilling to leave his evil courses, and still the father pampered his sinful disposition by showing mercy, the parable would have been applicable to the Church doctrine of the Atonement. But such is not the case, because when the son "came to himself," he said: "I will arise and go to my Father and will say unto Him, Father, I have *sinned against heaven, and before thee*, And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants" (St. Luke xv. 17-19). These sentiments of the prodigal son are exactly the words of repentance which Islam would propose for every sinner; and the All-Knowing Father would come forward to receive him. How this parable has been twisted to substantiate the principle of Atonement is something that I cannot understand. This same aspect of the Divine Mercy has been beautifully expressed by a Persian poet in the following lines, when he speaks on behalf of God:—

Return, O Sinner, from the ways
Thou trodest in thine evil days.
It matters not how thou didst err—
As infidel or winebibber—
My Court, know thou in thy distress,
Is not a Court of Hopelessness.
Return—nor heed how oft, in vain,
Thou didst repent—to sin again!

Hawk of Justice and Hawk of Grace
In search of prey they ran a race;
They spied on the wing a bird of sin,
They circled o'er him in noise and din.
But the Hawk of Grace did the swifter fly
And swooped on the bird with a pleading cry:
"Repent, repent thou Sinful One,
Thy sin thy Lord will nowise shun.
To pay the price of sin, indeed,
Repent, thou wilt not ever need."

Thus the Muslim God invites every sinner to His Mercy if he promises to be faithful to Him. But His Mercy does not, in the ordinary way, go to one who never cares to be faithful to

† English rendering of a Persian poem.

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

Him again but remains obstinate in his evil ways. Herein lies the difference between the Muslim conception of God's mercy and the Christian conception of Atonement. Whatever sentimentality or prejudice may assert, Nature is the true umpire. It supports the Qur-ānic description of God and contradicts what is taught by the Church to explain its story of the Atonement. I would also suggest that our belief in God as "Rahmān"—His second Attribute—debars us from belief in the Atonement, seeing that we do *not* find that God is incapable of showing mercy without some *quid pro quo*. He can remit sins without exacting any punishment, but if He does punish, under His fourth Attribute, it is simply for our correction, and even then we are told that He will, in the long run, forgive sinners by remitting their punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad has given us these good tidings that, in the end, God, out of His goodness, which loves to work without reward, will forgive even the evildoers of the most hopeless type. Here we find something far superior to the so-called Love of God as conceived by the Church. To sum up, the God of Islam often forgives the sinner. If He punishes, it is by way of chastisement for our correction, but in the end He will forgive all even without punishment. He will have no need to suffer crucifixion, for forgiving our sins. He will, and can, achieve His object without it. It is in this sense of the word, as I shall show later, that our God is Omnipotent.

It is clear that no conception of God can be complete, unless it includes belief both in His Omnipotence and Omniscience. An Infinite Being cannot come within finite conception; therefore God is transcendental. He is neither *knowable* nor *definable*. But still we are capable of forming some idea of things infinite. We know nothing of the Divine Essence, but we can conceive of some of His Attributes—Attributes that are observable as working in Nature. All morality in Islam is a shadow of Divine Morals. If we follow Him humbly all will be well with us. Again, if we have been fashioned after the image of the Lord we must be capable of conceiving, as well as imitating, some of God's ways which I have summed up in

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

the words—the whole of Islam. The faith on its objective side is this, that we shall steep ourselves in the colours of God.¹ For this reason the Holy Book has given God some hundred names. The list is not exhaustive, but it mentions some of His qualities which come within the range of our conception and imitation. Nothing in itself is wrong. Good and evil are relative terms. Occasion and the use of things make them good or bad. For example, autocracy, or a brutal exhibition of force on our part, is an evil expression of Power, but when Power is used to execute justice or to crush evil it is altogether beneficent. Such, too, is the case with every concept that can be entertained concerning God. Every word that can be used to express any Attribute of God may also convey an evil aspect of that Attribute. To keep us on our guard, the Qur-án says that God possesses Excellent Names²—meaning that the names which the Holy Book has used as expressing the various Attributes of God should be taken in their best sense. Under these circumstances, how can we give such a connotation to these words as will convey their evil side? The word “Power,” therefore, when used as an Attribute of God cannot be taken as signifying autocracy or brute force.

Besides knowledge and power, the Divine Will is also one of the chief themes of the Qur-án. It subdues the will of all created things to Itself. We believe it to be so, but it would be absurd for our critics to suppose that we believe in our God as a self-made entity or as one arbitrary in His ways. Muslim theologians have made use of another precaution in this respect. They use “Al,” the Arabic article, before every such name. “Qādir” and “Qadīr,” in the Arabic language, mean “powerful” and “mighty.” But when we say or write Al-Qādir we at once mean God, and the words exclude all such connotations as are not of the loftiest. Even the Dean of Hong Kong was compelled to take a similar precaution when he spoke of Love as the Attribute of God. He knew that there were various wrong and wanton forms of what is called Love. Lust, for instance, is Love in its crudest shape. Now we do not find such precaution in any scripture other

¹ Holy Qur-án, ii. 138.

² Ibid., lix. 24.

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

than the Qur-án. But the best of all these precautions we find in the choice of the words used in the Book about God. These in themselves negate any idea of evil, and I will give all the Holy Names used in the Holy Qur-án to signify Power. They are nine in number and are as follows:—

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| (1) " Al-'Aziz " | (4) " Al-Qawīyy " | (7) " Al-Qadīr " |
| (2) " Al-Jabbār " | (5) " Al-Qādir " | (8) " Al-Jalīl " |
| (3) " Al-Qahhār " | (6) " Al-Muqtadir " | (9) " Al-Majīd " |

They all mean " powerful," but imply different forms of Power. " Al-'Aziz " means Mighty, Potent, Powerful and Strong in its absolute sense. But it is opposed to everything that is low or mean. It also signifies noble, honourable, glorious, or illustrious. Though it has the sense of " He Who is invincible," nevertheless, wisdom and knowledge are the necessary adjuncts of the word. How could Al-'Aziz be autocratic or brutal if His ways are necessary to be noble and honourable? " Al-Jabbār " and " Al-Qahhār " signify the power and influence which bring others under His subjection and makes them subservient to His Will; but this pre-eminence should be accompanied by firmness and justice. It must help the subordinate to bring out all that is best in him. The subordinate may, for example, be compared to blind force and energy, but " Al-Jabbār " and " Al-Qahhār " should guide it into a proper channel. The Dean referred perhaps to these Attributes when he tried to find fault with the Muslim conception of the Divine Will. God is unworthy of such a title if His Will does not bring the will of others into subjection. But when this takes place in order to set the misguided will on the right way, then it is the best use of the said will. " Al-Qawīyy " is He Who possesses both physical and spiritual strength in the highest degree and uses them for the good of others. " Al-Muqtadir " refers to such power as enables its possessor to face life's hardships and succeed in any enterprise which demands ability, perseverance, and courage. He encounters and surmounts all the difficulties that may arise in the performance of great deeds. " Al-Qādir " refers to a man's high achievements in wisdom and knowledge which he uses

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

with power enough to overcome all opposition. "Al-Jalil" implies such works of power performed by us as induce others to praise and glorify us. More especially does it refer to that kind of power which excites the wonder and surprise of others. "Al-Majid" also means "power," but it makes generosity and liberality of mind a special feature of the man. He is *Majid* whose work is profitable to others.

Not only does the Qur-án make use of these words on the occasions I have mentioned, but reliable Arabic lexicons also give these various shades of meaning attached to them, though all mean "powerful," "potent," and "mighty." Let the Dean meditate on these meanings and he cannot but admire the different manifestations of Power to which they point. He will find in them the most valuable assets of our character if we can but acquire them. Many a time have I felt surprised at the ignorance which Christian writers evince on the subject of Islam. I would excuse all writers like the Dean whose knowledge is only second-hand. But what are we to say of those in the Christian camp who pose as Arabic scholars, some of them indeed occupying chairs of Arabic in Western universities? I do not know how to distinguish between mischief and ignorance when such blunders emanate from gentlemen of this kidney. Either they know very little of Arabic and, therefore, are not entitled to hold their learned positions, or they are intentionally guilty of literary indecency.

Some six years ago, when I wrote *The Ideal Prophet*, I referred in its Introduction to such objectionable doings on the part of certain University Professors of Arabic. I pointed out what I may call their literary blackguardism. They have read my book, but they must have appreciated my remarks because they evidently thought that silence was more prudent than a reply. But let the Dean consult Lane, for example, as to the meaning of the words I have given above. These Holy Names are undoubtedly most excellent Names. They furnish us with the best illustration of the Power which it is our aim to possess and use, and they preclude all misuse of force.

I need say little more on the subject beyond a few remarks on the question of Love, seeing that it is wrongly alleged that

CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

Islam has none of the higher Ideals of Love. I have already observed that the Holy Qur-án did not use "hubb" as the Arabic equivalent for the word "love" or any of its derivatives concerning God, because Love, as such, has various objectionable aspects which are unbecoming to an honourable gentleman, to say nothing of God. The Qur-án, speaking about God, refers to such manifestations of Love as assume different forms of goodness, mercy, and compassion as alluded to above. I need not repeat them here, but I wish to state emphatically that no other form of Love can come up to this Muslim conception of the Divine Love. The Qur-án, however, speaks of God as "Al-Wadūd," which means He Who affectionately loves others and Whose love exceeds others in its intensity. The word "Wadūd" does not convey any lustful or loose idea, more especially when it is used about God.

CHAPTER III

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

MUSLIMS think that the Christianity of the Church makes no demand upon character, while the Dean, like other Christian controversialists, asserts that "Islam makes less demand upon character than does Christianity." Both statements cannot be true, though Muslims and Christians have been saying so all the time. The problem demands calm and unbiased deliberation. And here I will endeavour to say something on the respective merits of both faiths. I hope I shall not allow any prejudice—natural enough—to interfere with my judgment. I will first state the case for Christianity, as I understand it, and I will do so honestly. The Dean might be interested to know that I have devoted my most earnest attention to this question. Once I was on the point of becoming one of Christ's sheep, but I was asked by a Muslim friend to look at the matter from a particular angle (*vide Open Letters to the Lords Bishops of London and Salisbury*—by the author). Further consideration and inquiries induced me to study the problem more closely, and that proved to be a turning-point in my life. In the long run, I became confirmed in my present beliefs. I have referred to this episode in my life to show that I do not possess a merely superficial information on the subject.

I believe that the religion taught by Jesus himself (St. Matt. iv. 5)—and it is no other than the religion of Moses which became perfected afterwards in the form of Islam—does undoubtedly make demands on character. But the religion of Jesus is at variance with the religion of Pauline literature which afterwards became the superstructure of current Christianity. I need not detail the circumstances that led the Early Fathers to gradually relinquish the original pristine faith of Jesus. Suffice it to say that the reformations that Jesus tried to make in the religion of Moses, seeking to restore it to its

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

original spirit and purity, excited severe opposition in his own tribe; so much so that they would have nothing at all to do with his teaching. The coming generation of his ministers found no promise whatever among the Jews (see Acts of the Apostles). They therefore turned their missionary activities towards the Gentiles—"Now turn we to the Gentiles." In order to make the religion popular among the Romans and the Greeks, attempts were made to introduce a Mystery Cult into the simple religion of Jesus, which was no other than the religion of "Obedience and Commandment." The new scheme seems to have been outlined in Pauline literature, but it took some three centuries to work out the whole plan, when, in the days of Constantine, the Christian Faith became fully metamorphosed into Paganism.

The question has been fully dealt with by me in my book entitled the *Sources of Christianity*, and the facts disclosed in the book have been well known for many years. To resume, if the religion of Jesus is the religion of Sermons, the religion of the Church called after his name is the religion of sacraments. If the former bases human salvation on obedience to the Law, the latter substitutes for it belief in the grace of Blood and participation in Eucharistic meals. Jesus would make admittance into Heaven solely dependent upon keeping the Commandment (St. Matt. xix. 17), while his Church, in its present form, would give a free passport to the kingdom of God to anyone who preferred to believe in the grace of his Blood. If this is the true statement of the case—and I, believing it to be so, would request the Dean to correct me if I am in error—then I cannot but hold with Martin Luther that belief in the Blood and Eucharistic meals does obviate the necessity for good actions and the fulfilment of the Law.

Under the Church belief, therefore, one need not observe morality. I do not mean that Christendom has become absolutely immoral, but this is the logical conclusion that I draw. I know that the Romish Church is keen on the observance of good actions, but logic ranges itself on the side of the Protestant Church. The Lutherans rightly conclude that good actions or morals are not needed after accepting the grace of the

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Blood. Because belief in the Blood is not required if actions are needed for salvation.

By Law and Righteousness I do not mean mere ceremonial piety. Jesus did not mean this when he said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (St. Matt. v. 18). Ceremonial piety is considered an essential of every faith, but it is of secondary importance—adopted as a disciplinary measure. It, in itself, is of no real value, unaccompanied by good deeds and high morals. The Qur-án, however, has most beautifully set forth this principle in the following verse: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil)" (Qur-án, ii. 177). It would appear, therefore, that by the fulfilment of the Law or by acting righteously, we mean the doing of good actions and the observance of high morals; seeing that almost all the Laws of the Qur-án directly sow the seeds of all forms of morality. I would, therefore, ask my Christian friends to consider that if my summary of the case, as I said before, is a true statement of facts, where is an occasion for a demand on morals under the teachings of the Formal Church? The case of Islam, on the other hand, is a most simple one. Faith without works is admittedly a dead letter with the Qur-án. Actions are the chief theme in the Book and they mean morals. Though these brief remarks are sufficient to meet the case, yet I wish to pursue a little further, since it is my desire to solve the vexed problem once for all.

"Faith," according to the Qur-ánic conception, is not our accepting a thing as verity, like the Christian's faith in the

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

Blood and its efficacy. "Faith," according to the Book, is our knowledge of certain truths, with convictions strong enough to convert them into action or fulfil their requirements. Herein lies the difference between our conception of Faith and that of Christianity. Action is an indispensable element of the Muslim Faith. The Holy Prophet, however, would not leave us to search in the Qur-án for such actions as are necessary to constitute our faith. He simplifies the matter when he says that "faith" in Islam has more than seventy branches. He also says that unless the requirements of these branches are fulfilled, the faith remains incomplete. And here I would mention some of such elements spoken of by the Prophet as have got a direct bearing on our morals.

- (1) Sense of shame, pudency, modesty.
- (2) Fear, especially of God.
- (3) Repentance.
- (4) Married life.
- (5) Physical cleanliness.
- (6) Abstinence from absurd things.
- (7) Abstinence from idle and undesirable talk.
- (8) Abstinence from indecency.
- (9) Abstinence from pride.
- (10) Abstinence from vanity.
- (11) Abstinence from hypocrisy.
- (12) Abstinence from avarice.
- (13) Abstinence from mischief.
- (14) Abstinence from anger.
- (15) Abstinence from malice.
- (16) Abstinence from dishonesty.
- (17) Abstinence from envy.
- (18) Abstinence from conceit.
- (19) Abstinence from extravagance and niggardliness.
- (20) Abstinence from exposing certain parts of the body.
- (21) Learning.
- (22) Hopefulness.
- (23) Trust in God.
- (24) Resignation to God.
- (25) Sincerity.
- (26) Flight from places of evil and insurmountable troubles.
- (27) Patience and perseverance.
- (28) To serve parents.
- (29) Charity to relatives, friends and other people in general.
- (30) Charity, beneficence, mercy and compassion.
- (31) Meekness, humility, and courtesy.
- (32) Almsgiving and benevolence to others.
- (33) Teaching and imparting knowledge to others.
- (34) Fair dealing in business.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

- (35) Bearing true witness.
- (36) Justice and equality.
- (37) Trustworthiness.
- (38) Acts of reform.
- (39) Helping in good action.
- (40) Giving good advice.
- (41) Forbidding wrong.
- (42) Fulfilment of promises.
- (43) Payment of debts.
- (44) Regards of limits.
- (45) Abstinence from injuring others.
- (46) Speaking good and kind words.
- (47) Return of greetings.
- (48) To be just and equitable in our profession and business.
- (49) The giving of loans to those in poverty.
- (50) Charity to neighbours.
- (51) Co-operation in good things.
- (52) Obedience to the Master.
- (53) Obedience to the Rule.
- (54) The removal of injurious things from the way of the people.
- (55) Gratefulness.

The Holy Prophet adds to the above fifty-five elements all that we read in the definition of the Muslim faith given by him. These are the seven articles of our faith, and so we have to believe in each and all of them. We may or may not believe in any religious system, but must believe in these verities, for they are part and parcel of our health and happiness and they ought to be the articles of faith of any religion which claims to have come from God. They are as follows:

- (1) God, as the Source of Law.
- (2) Angels—the functionaries of Law.
- (3) The Books—the records of Law.
- (4) The prophets—the intermediate persons who receive the first message from the Lord.
- (5) The Hereafter.
- (6) The Law
- (7) The Resurrection.

To the above list I would add some such attributive Names of God, given in the Qur-án as demand of us the observance of certain moral ideals. I have already remarked that Islam, on its objective side, requires that we should imbue ourselves with the Divine Character, and dye (ii. 132) ourselves in the Attributes of God.

- (1) "Rabbu 'l-'Ālamīn." Nourisher of all.
- (2) "Ar-Rahmān." He Who is beneficent to others of His own accord.

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

- | | |
|---|--|
| (3) " Ar-Rahīm." | He Who rewards others' actions to a greater extent than their desires or deserts. |
| (4) " Al-Karīm." | Generous and Bounteous. |
| (5) " Al-Wahhāb." | He Who showers His blessings on others regardless of their merits. |
| (6) " Al-Razzāq." | Nourisher. |
| (7) " Al-Mu'tī." | Giver of gifts. |
| (8) " An-Nāfi'." | He Who brings profit to all and does not stand in need of others. |
| (9) " Al-Ghanī " and (10) " Al-Mughnī." | He who is rich and does not stand in need of others, but makes others rich and free from want. |
| (11) " As-Samad." | He Who looks to the need of others and on Whom all depend for their needs. |
| (12) " Al-Wadūd." | He Who is " Love " and loves others intensely. |
| (13) " Al-Wālī." | The Guardian of others. |
| (14) " Al-Mujīb." | He Who listens to the prayers of others and responds to one who beseeches. |
| (15) " Al-Hādī." | He Who guides others in the right path. |
| (16) " Ar-Ra'ūf." | He Who, out of kindness, wards off impending troubles and evils overtaking others. |
| (17) " Al-Mu'min." | The Maintainer of peace. |
| (18) " Al-Muhaimin." | He Who guards others in the time of danger. |
| (19) " Al-Hāfiz." | The Protector. |
| (20) " Al-'Adil." | " All-justice-and-equity " is one of the Names of God, but this is explained by another attribute " Mālik-i-Yaumiddīn "—Master of the Day of Requital. |
| (21) " Al-Ghafūr." | The Great Forgiver. |
| (22) " Al-'Afūww." | The Pardoner. |
| (23) " At-Tawwāb." | The Acceptor of repentance. |
| (24) " Al-Halīm." | He Who shows forbearance or clemency when wronged by others. He Who conceals offences; Modest, Gentle, leisurely in His dealings, not of hasty temper, Grave and Calm. |
| (25) " Ash-Shakūr." | He Who approves or rewards others largely for small deeds. |
| (26) " Al-Hamīd." | He Who is praised in every way. |
| (27) " Al-Haqq." | He Who is Right, Correct. |
| (28) " Al-Hasīb." | He Who is giver of what suffices. |
| (29) " As-Sabūr." | He Whose patience is greater than that of others. |
| (30) " Al-Muqsit." | He Who acts equitably and gently. |
| (31) " Al-Wasiyy." | He Who is relied upon in the management of affairs. |
| (32) " As-Sattār." | He Who conceals others' faults. |

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Out of the one hundred Names given in the Qur-án that exhaust the whole gamut of religion, ethics, and various shades of character, I have mentioned here only such sacred Names and branches of the Muslim Faith as refer to what is popularly known as morality. The various elements of the Faith given by the Prophet have been really inferred by the Holy Prophet from Qur-ánic injunctions. For brevity's sake, I have not quoted these verses, but I have given all of them in my recently published book *Islam and Civilization*. If the Dean would but consider the Qur-ánic one hundred Names of God—because the morals mentioned by the Holy Prophet are mere offshoots of the said Names—he would find that not only did they cover the whole field of morality, but also brought everything within their scope which could serve to complete human civilization. Let him study the question of civilization itself and find out its various constituents, and I assure him that these Holy Names have anticipated them all. These Names are no part of a dogmatic theology but they receive their justification in the working of Nature. In fact, religion has no business other than to inform us of the ways of the Lord working in the universe, so that we may follow them as His vicegerents on earth. Then the "Image of God," which is to say, man, would become a reality. This is the Muslim view of religion, and he regards all other stories of salvation as fiction. In this connection, I may ask my Christian readers to consider if the Lord of Christianity showed any trace of these morals. A perfect man is one who clothes himself in these one hundred Names, and Muhammad (may God bless him), as I read matters, is the only person of the human race who seems to possess all these qualities.

I give here a few more verses from the Holy Qur-án which speak of morals in general.

"And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing." "And they who say: O our Lord, turn away from us the chastisement of hell, surely the chastisement thereof is a lasting evil" (xxv. 64-65). "And they who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean." "And

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden, except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication; and he who does this shall find a requital of sin " (xxv. 67-68). " And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a (goodly) turning." " And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by that which is vain, they pass by nobly." " And they who, when reminded of the communications of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind." " And they who say: O our Lord! grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those who guard (against evil) " (xxv. 71-74). " Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward " (xxxiii. 35). " And they say: Glory be to our Lord, most surely the promise of our Lord was to be fulfilled." " And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility." " Say; call upon Allah or call upon the Beneficent God; whichever you call upon, He has the best names; and do not utter your prayer with a very raised voice nor be silent with regard to it, and seek a way between these." " And say: (All) praise is due to Allah, Who has not taken a son and Who has not a partner in the kingdom, and Who has not a helper, to save Him from disgrace; and proclaim His greatness, magnifying (Him) " (xvii. 108-III). " Those who say: Our Lord! surely we believe, therefore forgive us our faults and keep us from the chastisement of the fire "; " The patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (benevolently) and those who ask forgiveness in the morning times " (iii. 15-16). " . . . And give away wealth out of love for Him to the near

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil) " (ii. 177). " And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) ' Ugh ' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word." " And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little " (xvii. 23-24). " And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully." " Surely the squanderers are the fellows of the devils and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord." " And if you turn away from them to seek mercy from your Lord which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word." " And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you should (afterwards) sit down blamed, stripped off " (xvii. 26-29). " And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); surely to kill them is a great wrong." " And go not nigh to fornication; surely it is an indecency and evil is the way." " And do not kill anyone whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause and whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not exceed the just limits in slaying; surely he is aided." " And draw not near to the property of the orphan except in a goodly way till he attains his maturity and fulfil the promise; surely every promise shall be questioned about." " And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a true balance; this is fair and better in the end." " And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that." " And do not go about in the land exultingly; for you

DEMANDS ON CHARACTER

cannot cut through the earth nor reach the mountains in height " (xvii. 31-37). " Repel evil by what is best; We know best what they describe " (xxiii. 96). " And those who shun the great sins and indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive." " And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and their rule is to take counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them." " And those who, when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves." " And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah; surely He does not love the unjust " (xlii. 37-40).

The Qur-án contains about five hundred orders and injunctions which comprehend all the ups and downs of life, while almost all of them make distinct calls on our morals in the real sense of the word.

Though I am convinced that the Church religion makes no demand whatever, as I have said, on our morals, let me admit, for the sake of argument, that it does; in which case we shall have to consider the sermons and other teachings of Jesus. In this connection I would request the Dean to give his attention to two things. First, let him read the whole Sermon on the Mount and all the utterances of Jesus containing moral precepts, and see if the Qur-ánic demands on our morals are not more extensive than those in the teachings of Jesus. I believe I am justified if I repeat the very utterance of the learned Dean, reversing only the order in which he puts the two words " Islam " and " Christianity." I would, therefore, say that Islam makes more demand upon character than does Christianity.

Of course, he would not find in the Qur-án precepts of Jesus which are of no value in the practical world. Such have never been acted upon by his followers. The Nazarene may not have seen his way to bringing them into practice—for instance, his preaching submission to evil may please some ears but tend to encourage immorality. They act as a sort of premium on evil. Islam cannot give countenance to such soft morality. Evil, no doubt, is in itself a great problem.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Its suppression ought to be the chief object of a religion. With it also comes the question of reforming evil-doers. The principle of submission to evil cannot do either. The Qur-án, however, has improved on the Sermon in this respect. To return good for evil is possible under certain circumstances, but in most cases it is impracticable. The Qur-án says "Repel evil by what is best"—i.e. evil should not be encouraged. It must be repelled by doing good if we can succeed in that way. It is the thing which is recommended here. But if punishment of evil is the best measure to suppress it, it ought to be resorted to. The Qur-án explains it yet further in lxii. 36-40 (quoted above). It suggests various courses suitable for various occasions. It admits the principle that the recompense of evil is punishment, but it suggests that we shall take counsel in the matter. It also recommends *forgiveness and the spending of money*, which means doing good, but the reformation of the evil-doer is the chief aim. We must do our best to achieve the object. We cannot love our enemy better than by reforming him. Even if we punish him for it, it is returning good for evil.

CHAPTER IV

CONSOLATION AFTER SIN

No creed or cult other than that of the Christian Church can convey to a sinner's mind that ease of heart and freedom from anxiety which he may feel after sin, if he is assured of exemption from punishment. The Church advocates may call it "Consolation of Mind," but it is experienced in that easiness of conscience which feels no remorse after sin. The Holy Communion has failed in instilling the mind of Christ into the partakers of the Sacred Elements, as it was meant to do. A religion of sacrament would become a religion of magic and charms, as the Bishop of Birmingham so aptly puts it, if it could compel the heart of the communicant to the path of virtue. On the other hand, history does not give any glowing testimony to the Church faith, so far as good morals go, since it came under the influence of the Mystery Cult. Christianity, indeed, opened a dark chapter when it became a State religion, and Paganism took a new name, with a new Lord in the person of Jesus. Every succeeding century in Christendom seemed to make matters worse. Sin became rank and the Church began to wade knee-deep in human blood. Whichever was in power, Roman or Lutheran, devised instruments of death for the other party, the very thought of which makes one's hair stand on end. Absolution ceased to be an exclusively papal right and gradually descended from the cardinal to the ordinary priest, who became authorized to hear confessions of sin and to grant absolution therefor. People went to confession every week to have their spoiled slates washed in order to fill them in the coming week with other and similar filth. Christianity became corrupt and decrepit, and it continued to be so till conscience became awakened under the influence of Islam through the "revival of learning."

It pains me to write more on the subject, but if these facts have been confirmed by history, it may be pertinently asked—Why did Christendom become so bold in filling God's world

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

indiscriminately with sin? Why was sin more prevalent among the Christian priestly class than among the like class in any other religion? A Christian apologist may say what he pleases, but if punishment is the chief deterrent of evil, the latter evidently became unbridled when impunity was granted to a sinner under the authority of the Church through absolution.

The present-day increase of evil in the Western world supports my opinion. Fear of punishment or of public obloquy usually keeps us within legitimate bounds, but if these two restraints are relaxed, the evil tendency in human nature gets out of hand. The fear of future punishment has lost its influence in the West. The doctrine of the Atonement has given exemption from a coming hell. It is only public censure, which sometimes assumes the shape of punishment by the Law, which prevents evil at all. Therefore the chief virtue in modern days seems to lie in finding out means to avoid detection of wrong-doing. For example, the sin of "social wrong" has reached its stinking stage in the most civilized centres in America. Law does not interfere—and that only on the civil side—in cases where the female culprit is under a matrimonial obligation. Birth control is highly popular as a means of concealing evil; fear of venereal troubles has become the only preventative of wrong. But the medical profession is doing its best to minimize the risk of such troubles. Are we not, then, going to experience another period analogous to the "Last Days of Pompeii," where "men with their women and indecent songs" went to the hell of oblivion for good? All the things that wrought the undoing of Roman civilization are in full blast in the Western Hemisphere. Europe is following the footsteps of the Romans and history must repeat itself.

If I have probed the case rightly on the psychological grounds, then the doctrine of the Atonement is, to a greater extent, responsible for this libertinism. If belief in the blood in removing the burden of sin from persons has encouraged evil in this way, we, who do not believe in the theory, are far better off if we do not possess the consolation of mind made so much of by Church dignitaries. We know very little of the hereafter. All of us live on promises given to us by our

CONSOLATION AFTER SIN

respective faiths; it is for us to decide the merits of the case from what we observe in this life. We find a greater measure of righteousness in such teachings as base salvation on deeds, but these have been losing their hold on minds that rejoice in the gospel of Blood.

But the so-called peace of mind has become perturbed in our days because most of its possessors, including the Modernists, have discovered that it is neither a new dispensation nor a new gospel. The world, from the very beginning, has seen two religions working side by side, one of actions and the other of another's sacrifice. The priest in the days of Fetishism, on a particular day of the year, used to pierce the heart of a young man, produced for the purpose, with a knife of stone. The "scapegoat" was thus killed and the priest raised his hands to heaven, reciting some sacred words, when the whole community rejoiced at seeing their sins got rid of in this way. The old religion imparted its features to the coming cult of sun-worship which dominated the whole of the North in olden days. The Sun-god was believed to have been born on the 25th of December and to have died on a date corresponding to Friday before the Easter Sunday. So the old belief went, so the Sun-deity had to fight for his life with the God of Darkness. His progress became stopped for two days in the struggle, at the time when he crossed the equator, and on the following Sunday he proved victorious over his adversary and came down from the Cross. He gave new life to the world and the occasion was celebrated by the Festival of Easter, when his votaries used to eat hot-cross buns and eggs as the Christians do on Good Friday and Easter Sunday respectively; and the Sun-worshippers adored the Cross as a sign of new life. This religion continued to develop until it assumed an established shape in a number of religions in the countries surrounding the birth-place of Jesus. All these religions were different forms of the same thing—sun-worship; and they believed of their Sun-god everything which is taught by the Church about her Christ. To his dismay, the modern mind in the Church has not only discovered that his Lord is but the last of a list of pagan Christs, with a little difference (the main story is the

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

same everywhere), but that some of such events as were narrated individually of various sun-gods have been collected round the personage of Jesus. The modern mind finds that Bacchus called himself, first, the deliverer of the human race and the Alpha and Omega of the world. He finds that Apollo was called the Beautiful Shepherd and was painted with a shepherd's staff in his hand and sheep browsing around him. It was not Jesus but Adonis—another sun-god—who was born at the spot where the Church of the Nativity is now seen. The Madonna and Child took the place of Isis and Horus on her lap. Quetzacoatl, the Mexican sun-god, receives his name from a word which literally means "my beloved son." Thus the modern mind, finding everything in Christianity borrowed from Paganism, also sees that said "consolation" was not his exclusive privilege but an old heathen custom; and this has again led him to realize that the punishment meted out to Adam was not only death, but consisted of other things as well. Women had to bring forth children in sorrow and man had to eat bread in the sweat of his brow. Now, although the penalty of the sin has been paid at Calvary, yet the punishment pronounced in the Book of Genesis still goes on. The story of Redemption so far as punishment in this world is concerned has been contradicted by facts, and we may presume that the same applies to the future life.

The Qur-án, however, speaks of a "consolation" that comes to man in this life. It is a reality and no imaginary thing. It gives us a foretaste (ii. 25) of the heaven we have to enter into in the life after death. We also realize here the nature of the Resurrection before we get the said consolation. These things have been spoken of in the following verses respectively in the Qur-án:

"O soul that art at rest! return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden" (lxxxix. 27-30). "Nay! I call to witness the day of resurrection. Nay! I call to witness the self-accusing spirit" (lxxv. 1, 2). These verses speak of the said two truths—Heaven and the Resurrection—as moral and intellectual conditions in the coming life. Islam does not admit of any local

CONSOLATION AFTER SIN

heaven, nor does it speak of its geography. It makes mention of a heaven "the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth" (lvii. 21). In order to understand these verities we have to study our own mind and its development. We arise from the animal kingdom and bring with us animal hankerings. The brutes possess no individual consciousness and consequently acknowledge no private rights among themselves. It is in violation of these rights that evil gets its genesis. Every child in babyhood exhibits traits of his animal nature. He regards the property of others as his own and cries to get it. Later on, the same nature impels us to usurp others' possessions and we are led to commit sin in so doing. This mental condition in us has been called in the Qur-án the "commanding spirit" (xii. 53), since it is always ordering us to do whatever it likes rightly or wrongly. This is the primary condition of our mind and may be termed "animal consciousness." Then individual consciousness gradually dawns upon us, and we begin to think of private rights. We hesitate from appropriating the things of others to our own use. The recognition of private rights soon becomes strong, crushing down all those evil tendencies in which our early instincts manifest themselves. But it is not easily done. It is uphill work. It gives rise to a continual struggle in our minds between the Commanding Spirit and the new spirit which the Qur-án calls the "chiding spirit" or Accusing Soul. The Commanding Spirit urges us to do every kind of sin, while the Chiding Spirit steps in and admonishes us to do nothing that is evil. This spirit has been popularly called "conscience." If we do not allow the Commanding Spirit to kill our conscience and prefer to listen to the voice of the latter, we ultimately reach that stage of consciousness which marks the end of the struggle. The voice of the Commanding Spirit is hushed for ever, and the Chiding Spirit has its triumph. This gives rise to that mental and moral condition which the Holy Book terms the "spirit at rest." This is the condition which is called "soul" in common parlance. The Soul, then, does not come from without, but is a certain development of human consciousness. With serenity and

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

peace of mind we willingly do all that is virtuous and good. We have reached the top of the hill. Evil has lost all its temptations for us. We become resigned to our Lord. Though we possess full freedom of action, yet we are like a lifeless thing in the hands of God, and willingly conduct ourselves according to His Will. Temporary vicissitudes do not disturb our peace of mind. We enter into our heaven in this life. This is the consolation of which I spoke, and which comes to every righteous man before he dies. The condition thus achieved will become more developed, especially when shorn of all physical attributes and translated to higher regions after our decease. But if we cannot develop these noble faculties in ourselves and die in such a state when we are in the clutches of the Commanding Spirit, we have made no progress in our course and are still verging on the borders of the animal. We are in the hands of evil. This is the hell in this life which will be yet more severe in the next.

Our life here, if regulated on proper lines, gives us some idea of the coming state. If the Commanding Spirit creates a hell in us and the Spirit at Rest carries us to Heaven, the Chiding Spirit gives us an insight into the nature of the Resurrection. When the said spirit shall have acquired full mastery over men it will become more intense in its accusations, and the more intense will be our perceptions and feelings. The Resurrection, in fact, is a moral rising of the spirit from a moral death and our strong consciousness of our short-comings.

I have not spoken here of things beyond our comprehension and observation. I have come across men moving in the said three stages of life—men who with calm and peaceful mind have won the battle against evil. They have subdued the devil. They do virtuous deeds for virtue's sake and feel happy in so doing; evil becomes an abomination to them and they shun it. I have also seen men that are in constant fight with the devil. They struggle against evil and listen to the censure of the Chiding Spirit. But most men are playing into the hands of Satan and given to carnal passion. On the other hand, we are told a story by the Church which has no echo in the lives of most men. Neither belief in the Blood nor

CONSOLATION AFTER SIN

participation in the Sacrament liberates them from the clutches of sin. They do not find the efficacy of the Sacred Elements in purifying their nature. It would be a miracle or a charm if the last partaking of the Holy Communion on a man's death-bed should avail to transmute the base metal in him into gold.

I am afraid we belong to the world of culture. We can only believe in experience and observation. Pleasant promises with nothing to support them do not appeal to us.

A DECISIVE WORD

Here I would invite Dean Swan's earnest consideration. Islam and Christianity are admittedly irreconcilable—nay, they contradict each other in their basic principles. We regard sin as an abomination, and yet we are told by the Church that we are born in it. We abhor evil, but we are told we cannot shun it. We find ourselves quite capable of obeying the law, yet we are told we cannot do so. On the other hand, Islam gives us a gospel and our experience bears it out. It teaches us that we are born sinless, that we come into the world with a pure nature; that sin is only an after acquisition, but that if we give strict obedience to the law we can avoid it. The Qur-án also says that we have been equipped with the best of capabilities and are capable, therefore, of obeying every law. If we could not exist without breaking the Law, all legislation would be an anomaly. We make progress in various departments of life, but no success will come to us unless we observe the law pertaining to the work we have in hand. It is beyond our comprehension to think that though we can observe all the laws concerning mundane affairs, we cannot keep up commandments. If the commandments alluded to are those given to Moses, I find no obstacle in the way of our obedience to them. Besides, why did Jesus lay emphasis on keeping the Commandments if it was an impossibility? Is it not a glaring inconsistency on the part of Christians, on the one side, to say that Christianity makes more demands on morals than Islam, and on the other to believe that we men are incapable of observing them? Com-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

mandments, when kept, produce good morals; and I would say one word more. Islam appears to me a most elevating and energizing religion, while faith in the Church doctrine involves belief in our self-abasement. It teaches us that we are left in the lurch and that there is nothing to be done about it unless someone else lends us a helping hand. What a low view to take of ourselves and of our self-reliance! Islam, on the other hand, tells us that we are not in any abyss, though we may be sitting on the brink of it. We have to choose our path, no doubt, and walk warily, but we have been given legs wherewith to do so.

CHAPTER V
MODEL OF ACTION
JESUS AND MUHAMMAD

It is painful for Christians, as Dean Swan remarks, to be told that the Muslim world speaks of Jesus as a Prophet, yet some Christian controversialists attempt comparison between him and our Holy Prophet, thereby inviting us to meet them on their own ground. I, personally, find invidious comparison a particularly odious task. Though some of the remarks in the Dean's address induced me to refer to the subject, yet I was by no means clear as to what my course should have been, until quite unexpectedly a letter reached me from the U.S.A. from a notorious religionist deeply interested in foreign missions, in which he offers the same challenge. We Muslims have been ordered by the Qur-án to make no difference between prophet and prophet (ii. 136); but the Church accepts her Lord as a God which, candidly speaking, is an insult to the monotheistic sense innate in a Muslim. Though Jesus evinced many human infirmities, yet dogmatic theology asks us to accept these infirmities as manifestations of certain Divine traits commingled with humanity. It asserts that when God appeared as man He was pleased to choose humble parentage with women like Rahab and Uriah's wife among His ancestors. It is also said He suffered indignity and disgrace for the same—a thing which transcends any possible human conception of the Supreme Being. Ancient India has also believed in Gods-incarnate, but most of them, like Ram Chander, Krishna, and Paras Ram, possessed power that betokened a shadow of the Lord. In my own humble opinion all this shame and disgrace that fell to the lot of Jesus was a warning that a person with such a faith, though a very great man and a martyr for the Truth, cannot be God—the Ruler of all that is in heaven and on earth.

Natural theology is now an established fact. The work

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

of Nature discloses certain indications of the Hand behind the scene which may be safely taken as the very best criterion whereby to judge the claims of the Lord of Christianity to Godhood. I am glad to note that the last book of 'God has helped us greatly in this matter. It speaks of 100 Attributes of God, as I have mentioned before. They enumerate the Divine ways of the Lord that are observable in Nature as appertaining to Him. They also may be taken as an exemplar for our own mode of life. We have been told in the Qur-án that we have come here as vicegerents of God. To us have potentially been delegated the powers signified by the Holy Names. We are also told that all our chances of success and happiness lie in equipping ourselves with these Divine Qualities, and I therefore take the Sacred Names as our guide in considering the position of the Lord Christ. In this case, though the Excellent Names represent the potential qualities of a perfect man, yet Jesus, according to the Gospels, seems to have lacked many of them. For example, I find the following Names in the Sacred List. Of some of them I have made mention in former pages, together with their meanings, but in order to refresh the memories of my readers (since it seems to me immensely important that we should decide this vexed question between Christianity and Islam) I take the liberty of repeating what I have already said.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| (1) " Ar-Rahmān." | He Whose blessings come to men unmerited and of His own accord, in every respect. |
| (2) " Ar-Rahīm." | He Who gives manifold rewards to our actions. |
| (3) " Al-Karīm." | Bounteous. |
| (4) " Al-Wahhāb." | He Who showers His blessings on others regardless of their merits. |
| (5) " Al-Razzāq." | Nourisher. |
| (6) " Al-Mu'tī." | The Giver of Gifts. |
| (7) " Al-Ghanī " and | He Who is rich Himself and enriches |
| (8) " Al-Mughnī." | others. |
| (9) " As-Samad.' | He Who looks to the needs of others and on Whom all depend for their needs. |
| (10) " Al-Wālī." | The Guardian of others. |
| (11) " Al-Mujīb." | He Who answers prayers. |
| (12) " Ar-Ra'ūf." | He Who, out of kindness, wards off from others impending troubles and evils. |

MODEL OF ACTION

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (13) "Al-Muhaimin." | He Who guards others in the time of danger. |
| (14) "Al-Hāfiz." | The Protector. |
| (15) "Al-Hafiz." | One immune from dangers. |
| (16) "Māliki Yaumi 'd-Dīn" | Master of the Day of Requital. |
| (17) "Al-Tawwāb." | The Acceptor of Repentance. |
| (18) "As-Shakūr." | He Who rewards others generously for small deeds. |
| (19) "Al-Hamid." | He Who is praised in every way. |
| (20) "Al-Hasīb." | He Who is sufficient as a Reckoner or as a Giver of what suffices. |
| (21) "Al-Muqsit." | He Who acts equitably and justly. |
| (22) "Al-Majid." | He Who possesses glory and dignity. He Who is righteous in His actions as well as munificent. |
| (23) "Al-Wāsi'." | Ample in His means to keep others from straitened circumstances. Liberal in disposition. |
| (24) "Al-Wakīl." | He Who is relied upon in the management of affairs. |
| (25) "Al-Shāhid." | He Who is present and bears witness to things rightly. |
| (26) "Al-Ahad." | The One, The Unique in His ways. |
| (27) "Al-Muta'āll." | Superior to others in all excellent qualities. |
| (28) "Zu 'l-Jalāli wa 'l-Ikrām." | He Who possesses greatness, majesty, and bounty. |
| (29) "Al-Barr." | The Compassionate, The Benign to His servants, The Boundless in goodness and beneficence. |
| (30) "Al-Bāqī." | He Who survives others and keeps things intact, or in the state in which they are. |
| (31) "Al-Rāfi'." | He Who raises another's status and condition. |
| (32) "Al-Mu'izz." | He Who increases honour for others; and |
| (33) "Al-Muzill." | He Who degrades others in rank. |
| (34) "Al-Hayy." | He Who is ever-living and makes others so. |
| (35) "Al-Qayyūm." | He Who is self-subsistent and makes others so. |
| (36) "Al-Mumīt." | He Who puts another to death. |
| (37) "Al-Muqaddim." | He Who gives others preference or promotes. |
| (38) "Al-Mu'akhkhir." | He Who reduces others to the lowest grade. |
| (39) "Al-Awwal." | The First. |
| (40) "Al-Ākhir." | The Last. |
| (41) "Al-Matin." | The Strong, The Firm, The Hard. |
| (42) "Al-Wājid." | He Who knows the whereabouts of all things. |
| (43) "Al-Muntaqim." | He Who, for the establishing of good, avenges Himself upon wrong-doers. |
| (44) "Al-Wālī." | The Owner, The Protector. |

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| (45) " Al-'Azīz." | The Mighty, Potent, Powerful. |
| (46) " Al-Jabbār " and | He Who is powerful and influential in |
| (47) " Al-Qāhhār." | bringing others under His control. |
| (48) " Al-Qāwīyy." | One Who possesses both physical and |
| | spiritual strength in the highest degree. |
| (49) " Al-Qādir." | One Who has achieved the highest in |
| | wisdom and knowledge, which He uses |
| | with Powers enough to surmount all |
| | opposition that may come in His way. |
| (50) " Al-Jalīl." | The Doer of such things that may excite |
| | the wonder and surprise of others. |

I have only given here half of the Sacred List. I have left all the Names which speak of God's Knowledge, Wisdom, Design and Control of the Universe. Before I go further I would ask my readers to bear in mind that we have to consider the case of Jesus as narrated in the biblical record. Without questioning its veracity we are prepared to accept it as it stands, and yet that record does not disclose any action of the Master that may reasonably be included under these Names. I again request my Christian friends to beware of the vicious circle.

They regard him as God and are welcome to believe that he did possess potentially all that is signified by the above Names; but they must also bear in mind that negative virtues are no virtues. A person may be credited with a certain moral, but he cannot claim to possess it until he has put theory into practice under conditions which will supply a sufficient test. It is for us to consider the case of Jesus without any prepossession or prejudice; to see whether potentialities, in the case of Jesus, became actualized. I may say that, in my opinion, he did not possess even a tittle of the qualities disclosed by the above Names.

I have made every allowance in favour of Jesus. I have eliminated, intentionally, certain of the Divine Names which may with some stretch of imagination be held to be applicable to him, such as " Al-'Affw "—The Pardoner; " Al-Ghafūr "—The Great Forgiver; " Al-Wadūd "—He Who loves intensely; " Al-Nāfi' "—The Profitable; " Al-Halīm "—Forbearer; " Al-Haqq "—He Who is right and truthful; " As-Sabūr "—The Patient, The Great Sufferer. Some few other Names may in

MODEL OF ACTION

like manner be applied to Jesus, but these words are so rich in their meanings that some of their applications cannot be found in him. For instance, "Al-Haqq" means Truthful and The Corrèct, but it also means that His words and actions must suit the occasion. Similarly, "As-Sabūr" not only conveys the idea of suffering but it signifies the "Patience" which is shown by people when they wait for the good result of their actions in unfavourable circumstances.

Jesus in some cases seems to manifest a high morality, but to fall short in some respects. For example, "Forgiveness" is a supreme moral virtue. It may be said that he forgave his enemies, especially when he was on the Cross. But the quality of forgiveness needs other essentials. There are four things necessary for its completion. First, the person must be persecuted by his enemies; secondly, he must overcome his enemies, and bring them crawling to his feet. Thirdly, he is justified in punishing them in requital for their former persecution. Fourthly, "forgiveness" comes from him of his own volition. In the case of Jesus only two out of these four essentials are found. No one came to him to ask for forgiveness, nor were his enemies ever at his mercy.

In vain we turn page after page of secular or sacred history to find an illustration of the case in the life of any great man. The only noble exception occurred in Mecca on the triumphal entry of the Holy Prophet Muhammad into that town, when he gave unconditional pardon to thousands of his implacable enemies who had ruthlessly been oppressing him and his companions for years. Ram Chandra, Krishna, and various prophets of Israel saw their enemies at their feet, but they preferred to punish them severely. The manifestation of true forgiveness would have been unheard of in the world had it not been for the example of the Arabian Prophet.

I may here refer to some others of the Divine Names which may be claimed by the Church for her Master. "Al-Awwal"—The First, and "Al-Ākhir"—The Last, are the two Names of God as mentioned above. It may be said that they apply to Jesus because of the words "I am Alpha and Omega" ("Beginning and the End," saith the Lord). But

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

similar words are said to have been uttered by Bacchus centuries before. They were taken from Greek writings and were put into the mouth of Jesus by the Evangelists. Besides, words are no proof of realities. "Al-Ahad" is another Name of God, signifying The Unique, The One, which may be taken to refer to the miracles of Jesus as well as to the miracle of his birth. But the biblical record divests him of this claim also, since he did not perform a single miracle the parallel of which has not been reported as having been wrought by other prophets in the Bible.¹ The Qur-án says the same thing.² He may be taken as having no father, but Adam was without father and mother. We also read of another person referred to by St. Paul, named Melchisedek,³ who had neither mother nor father, nor beginning nor ending.

I have approached Jesus with all the reverence to which he is entitled as a prophet and a great personality in history, but I failed to read anything in his story as given in the Bible that leads me to accept him as our God. The Holy Names which I have mentioned above signify character which, the book of Nature tells us, is possessed by its Maker. They are also the qualities of the perfect man and were revealed to us that we might imitate them. The Dean would probably agree with me when I say that we do not find them indicated in the life of Jesus.

Moreover, Jesus, as a man, cannot be taken as a universal model of action for humanity. To begin with, more than half of our life is usually occupied in domestic affairs. We have various responsibilities towards each other. We are fathers, sons, and husbands. The most difficult problem in domestic experience is that of husband and wife. Our conduct in the family makes of our life a heaven or a hell. But, unfortunately, we cannot look to Jesus in this respect for a model since he never married. His unmarried life unfortunately encouraged the institution of celibacy, and some of his words seem to have enjoined it, thus bringing into existence that

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 15, 23; 2 Kings v. 3; xi. 8; Josh. iii. 10, 16; Exod. xiv. 21.

² Holy Qur-án, v. 75.

³ Heb. vi. 20; and vii. 1-3.

MODEL OF ACTION

monastic life which has proved so terrible a moral flaw in the social fabric. We read the following in the Qur-án: "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) 'Ugh' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word" (xvii. 23). But we are horrified when we find Jesus reported in the Gospels as saying to his Holy Mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" The Qur-án acquits him of this and declares him to have been most respectful and kind to his mother.¹ It is quite possible that Mary did not follow the views of her Son, but Islam teaches us to remain always reverential to our parents, whatsoever may be their beliefs. We also find no illustration in him of the conduct that we should observe in our dealings with other relatives or friends. Even as citizens we can find no guidance in the Nazarene. Our natural sense of politeness hardly permits us to speak of our fellow-countrymen as a "generation of vipers," especially when we know that "serpent" in Jewish phraseology meant Satan. He may be taken as a good example of a recluse; but we have various mundane affairs to which our existence compels us to attend, and which are indispensable to our happiness and comfort. Jesus laid down certain rudimentary principles of socialism, but even the firmest advocates of the system would hardly care to follow the Master in his socialistic tenets. The right of ownership is the only incentive to activity in life, but the Gentle Philosopher seems to ignore it absolutely, nor does he care greatly for knowledge or any other of the recognized means for worldly success.

If we separate his sermons, prayers, curses, and miracles from his life record, his whole history can be written in three or four pages. It cannot, even when most favourably considered, be accepted as a complete model for our actions; and I may mention here some of the most important functions of human society without which it cannot go on. We must have some sort of sovereign political authority to control affairs, whether this be king, parliament, or president. We

¹ Holy Qur-án, xix. 32.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

also need a statesman, a law-giver, a warrior, a judge, and a maintainer of peace, and a code of ethics which will make for success in business. The tradesman is a very necessary element in society. But we find no recognition of this fact in the life of Jesus. How, then, can we look to him as our model? Rather should we look to Muhammad, as I will explain later on.

Jesus, no doubt, gave us admirable sermons and parables, but we find a large portion of them in the Talmud, Mishna, and the sayings of Lord Buddha, who appeared some five thousand years before Jesus; while the Jewish Scriptures were also in existence before he was born. But even the sermons would seem to be of little practical value, seeing that the precepts still remain as unrealizable. Besides, teachings are no index of their teacher's character. The world has seen many persons who, while not scrupling to commit sin, have nevertheless left us the most beautiful and edifying books on ethics and morality.

The Sermon on the Mount seems to have been delivered by the Gentle Nazarene after he had emerged from some kind of monastic seclusion. His mind is full of certain principles which he probably learnt from the Essenes. He had had, till then, no experience of practical life and could not translate those principles into practice. No sooner did he appear in public than he poured out all the innermost thoughts of his breast; but further experience in life changed his views. The teacher of "turn the other cheek" doctrine could not see any good in the principle of submission to evil and ordered his disciples to "sell their garments in order to purchase swords." The Prince of Peace had to say, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," and this teaching still appeals to his followers. They have sent sword and fire into every corner of the world, and there has never been any cult so inconsistent in precept and example. The Missionary Societies all over the world preach the soothing morality of Jesus as expressed in the Sermons; but after them come other followers of the Master, who fill the earth with human blood. The three M's—Merchants, Military, and Missionary—are sent

MODEL OF ACTION

to foreign lands, one after another, rather to secure political supremacy for the Western peoples than any moral victory for Jesus, because they unfortunately have carried with them the sins of drinking, gambling, and prostitution into regions where these evils had never hitherto been known.

The life of Muhammad cuts quite a different figure in the history of the world. He leaves us a complete record of his life. Though of noble extraction, he was born an orphan. He left the world when the whole country was at his feet. From a humble condition of life up to perfect prosperity he passed through and experienced every shade and form of honest living. His avocations were numerous and important, involving a profound knowledge of, and sympathy with, his fellow-men. He had, in fact, every opportunity for displaying the highest moral conduct in every walk of life. It would require volumes to deal adequately with a subject so vast. I would say here just a word to enable my readers to gain a true insight into his character. His morals were the morals of the Qur-án, so his companions were wont to say when describing his character. If they were asked to explain any Qur-ánic precept, they would refer to the conduct of the Holy Prophet, and if one should inquire as to his actions in connection with any particular phase of life, they would quote the Qur-án. The Holy Book was, as it were, a true portrait of Muhammad, while his life is the best commentary on the Qur-án. His history also authentically confirms the fact that he was the first person among all the Muslims around him who translated every good precept into practice. The Holy Book also bears testimony to this (vi. 163). Outspoken and frank in their utterances as were the Arabs of the Prophet's day, we do not find in the Traditions that they had ever any occasion to detect in the conduct of the Prophet anything contrary to Islamic teaching. I have already, in the course of the present work, enumerated the elements of the Islamic faith given by him; I have also set forth in these pages some eighty Holy Names of God; and if Muhammad acted up to the high morality demanded by the Holy Names and the various aspects of the faith, I do not see in history any man

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

—or even God-incarnate—other than Muhammad, who could be a better model for our actions.

All that has been written by hostile critics as to the life of the Prophet throws an interesting light on the question. I find many stories afloat in the enemies' camp which are pure fabrications—a circumstance also pointed out by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. One of these stories is of an alleged massacre in Mecca by the Holy Prophet. His private character as a whole, as admitted even by his foes, was above reproach. It was pure, chaste, and lovable. But his critics, when writing of his public life, labour under a certain confusion of ideas. They do not care to distinguish between principle and principle, and the action actuated thereby. Everything that has appeared questionable to others in Muhammad is a matter of principle. We should first see the advisability and the utility or otherwise of the principle in its abstract form, and then to criticize its translation into action. For instance, it is said that the Holy Prophet should not have married more wives than one at a time. Jesus, as I have already remarked, cannot give us guidance in this matter. Although he came to reform a tribe which was polygamous, and he himself was born in a similar family, he did not say a single word against the institution. Monogamy is not a Christian virtue. It was introduced, as a law, by Justinian—a Roman Emperor and law-giver. Christianity, indeed, had favoured polygamy for centuries. Many bishops, before modern days, used to have several unofficial wives. All other of the greater characters in sacred or secular history in every country had more than one wife under their roofs; and this was under the sanction of their various religions. The question is really between polygamy and monogamy. The former was in practice even in the best and most moral circles everywhere before the advent of Islam. The Prophet came to enforce a most desirable restriction as to number. Polygamy in Islam was a remedial law that came into operation under certain conditions of life. It would be too long a digression from my subject if I dwell further here upon this point; but I give instance. If conjugal companionship is our birthright,

MODEL OF ACTION

polygamy is a necessity when circumstances cause a decrease in the male population. The Great War has furnished the same problem, since it left five or six times more women than men in some European countries. England had about two million more women than men before the war, but that Armageddon doubled the number. The number of women in Nottingham was four times that of men, as was pointed out by one of the London daily newspapers in 1925. If conubial connection is a life instinct, as I said before, polygamy or else illicit connection is the only remedy. English legislation was forced to recognize that necessity by granting the so-called War-Baby Pensions. Al-Qur-án sanctioned, for the first time, polygamy under similar circumstances. The battles of Badr and Uhud had shattered the Muslim ranks. They had reduced the male population of the Muslim community, which was already very limited in number. These wars left a large number of widows and orphans without any protector. Now the Islamic polity does not permit a woman to live under the roof of a man who does not stand either in marital relation or in a prohibited degree of marriage to her. Such a wise principle is alone able to maintain the health and purity of morals in any society. Polygamy, after the above-mentioned battles, which were to be followed by similar events, was the only alternative, and it was resorted to under Qur-ánic injunctions. After the death of the Lady Khadija, the first wife of the Prophet, he married only one virgin. Neither beauty nor wealth was his motive in his other marriages. All his subsequent wives were widows and mostly wives of those of his friends who had given their lives in support of his faith. These noble ladies had no one to befriend them; in some cases no other person would sue them in marriage. Some had passed the middle age; none possessed the charms of youth; and they stood in urgent need of some sort of protection and maintenance; so the Holy Prophet had compassion on them.

The question, as I said before, is one of principle, and with it goes the consequent action. Marriage in Islam is a civil institution sanctified by religion. It is also a matter of economy to be resorted to when needful. But if the circum-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

stances of society do not admit of polygamy it can be dispensed with without interfering with the teachings of the Qur-án; and modern Turkey in disallowing it has done nothing against Islam.

The Holy Prophet has been also blamed for his warfare. This criticism does not come well from Christians, whose scriptures have commanded the unsheathing of swords and the extermination of enemies. Jesus also, as he admits, came to "send not peace, but a sword" into the world, and would have done so had it been possible. To ensure peace it is necessary at all times to be prepared for war. The Great War was waged between Christian nations. Every nation engaged in it had the sanction and prayers of its clergy to support it. The Bishop of London led a pious army on a day of intercession. He spoke in Hyde Park of the necessity of fighting. He went so far as to say that war was a necessity and in accordance with religion. We cannot exist unless we are prepared to resist those who disturb our peace and are not amenable to law. The world had need of a warrior prophet to give us, by precept and practice, a code of military ethics. This was Muhammad's task, since the problem had, before his time, never been properly defined. He gave us the last and most desirable laws in the matter,¹ one of them appertaining to war captivity.

Slavery was another curse of humanity. Unfortunately, it had received the sanction of every religion before Islam. The Roman, Judaic, and other laws of the world, including those of Christendom, encouraged slavery. After the Romans, Christian Europe permitted slavery in its worst form. Slaves were the subject of the Treaty between fighting nations in Europe. London was a notorious market until comparatively recent times for slave traffic. No prophet of the world, including Jesus, concerned himself with this accursed institution which afflicted nearly the half of humanity. Muhammad, for the first time in the world's history, abolished practically all forms of slavery, the only exception permitted by the Qur-án being in the case of prisoners-of-war (viii. 67). This will last

¹ See *Islam and Civilization*, by the same author.

MODEL OF ACTION

as long as war lasts. It will automatically cease when the sword is actually and permanently sheathed; and I am happy to note that the period has been foretold by the Holy Prophet when war shall disappear from the world.

The taking of prisoners-of-war has been allowed by all International Laws. The Hague Conference made provision for political prisoners. But these were set at naught by the belligerent nations in the Great War. But it is noteworthy that the laws framed by Islam are more humane than those since promulgated by others. It is the beauty of those laws that brought many so-called slaves under Islam to positions of authority in the country. A Slave Dynasty has been a famous ruling family in India. Mr. Lane Poole has very rightly remarked that the slave of to-day becomes the son-in-law of to-morrow in Muslim families.

In short, I fail to see any public action of the Prophet which if criticized involves a matter of principle.

In this connection I would briefly refer to the event which the Dean has been pleased to call the " Massacre of the Jews in Medina " by the Holy Prophet. The killing of a culprit is no offence if the culprit deserves it. Nothing is, in itself, evil; it is only wrong or untimely use which makes it so. The Holy Prophet, after his flight to Medina, found the town occupied by a heterogeneous population differing widely from each other in their beliefs and manners. He created a régime of democracy with himself as president, to which everyone in the town and the regions thereto adjacent submitted. All the tribes there entered into a defensive alliance. They were to help each other when attacked by an enemy from without, and were not to conspire with such an enemy against the people of Medina. A treaty was entered into to this effect and all agreed to refrain from any act of sedition. But a certain Jewish tribe, the " Bani-Quraiza " by name, were false from the very beginning. They were continually conspiring with the enemy. Islam was making headway, and this they could not stand. They therefore sent secretly to the Meccans and invited them to attack Medina. The enemy came in hordes, numbering upwards of ten thousand. They besieged

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

the town, which had been strongly entrenched by the Prophet, for several days, while the aforesaid Jewish tribe not only did not help the besieged, but became an open enemy, informing the Meccans of everything going on in Medina. But the siege was raised; the Meccans fled and left the Prophet victorious. Thereupon he asked the Jews to explain their conduct, and they, in turn, demanded trial by an independent tribunal. To this the Prophet agreed, and left them the choice of their judge. They selected Sa'd-bin-Waqqās to decide the case. He found them guilty and passed sentence of death on the traitors in accordance with their revealed law as given in the Bible; and the sentence was duly carried out. Can the Dean cite any code of law or equity that would justify him in calling this action of the Prophet a massacre? I may remind him of a similar occurrence in his own country of England during the Great War. Sir Roger Casement, an Irish ex-Civil Servant, conspired with the Germans and invited them to Ireland in order to attack England. The mischief was discovered and Casement was tried for high treason. He was convicted and sentenced to death. The King was petitioned for mercy, but the law had to take its course. I do not see much difference between the two cases.

CHAPTER VI

A DECISIVE WORD

THERE is no ground for reconciliation between Islam and Christianity. It is not so much that they differ from each other in detail as that they are diametrically opposed in their basic principles. Religion has come to set our nature on the right path and to carry it to perfection. All other things in the universe have the same religion for their advancement. They have before them a prescribed course given to them by their Creator, by pursuing which they will reach their respective goals. Human nature, moreover, is a repository of various capabilities, and stands in need of similar assistance if it is to bring its faculties to fruition. But the two faiths differ from each other in their view of our nature. They are like signposts pointing in opposite directions, suggesting opposite ways which are incapable of meeting.

We need not, therefore, enter into any detailed and elaborate arguments in the matter. We have only to consider the basic principles aforesaid to come to a right conclusion. I will state quite simply the fundamentals of the two religions and will leave the decision to the judgment of my readers. Our nature, according to Church theology, is corrupt and sinful by its very birth. Sin is innate in us. It comes to us as a heritage from our first parents who committed the first sin in the Garden of Eden. Their sins are upon us, and for them we have been doomed to eternal damnation.

Sin means the breaking of the law. We therefore were incapable, from the very beginning, of observing it; but yet God was pleased to send us His Laws, through His several Messengers, for four thousand years. The long experience proved ineffectual and we were found to be criminal by nature. We deserved punishment, but the Love of God sought to save us. On the other hand, His justice demanded a punishment for the inherited sin, so He contrived a new scheme of salvation and came Himself to pay the penalty. He sent His

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

it cannot go further unless and until the said blemishes are removed, every stage in its progress is a stage of preparation for that to come. We enter into this conscious order to qualify ourselves for a further journey after our death in the world of morals and spirituality. If we enter into the life beyond the grave properly prepared, we are accorded admission into what is called Heaven. But if our faculties, by reason of our disregard of the Law given us in this world for preparation, cannot develop, but have become corrupt, our progress is thereby checked and we must remove the stigma if we are to qualify ourselves for further progress. Since we have entered into the new world with a diseased soul, we need treatment of a purgatorial nature which must naturally be painful. This is Hell. This cleanses us of all impurities and fits us for advancement. Hell has, for this reason, been described in the Qur-án as our mother (xci. 9) or friend (li. 15), because maternal affection would subject a child to the pain of a surgical operation to free its body from a poisonous ulcer from which it was suffering. The Heaven and Hell of the Qur-án are not confined to any locality. They are only our mental and spiritual conditions, and the whole universe will act for us according to the preparation we have made for the future. Here, our movements are confined to terrestrial regions, but in future the whole face of Nature will be the scene of activities with unlimited progress before them (lvii. 21).

Every religion speaks generally of man as an image of God, but the Qur-án is more explicit. It says that we have been sent here to act as His vicegerents on earth (ii. 30). We have therefore been given the best and highest faculties (xcv. 4) to enable us to act as such. In short, we are capable of imbuing ourselves with Divine Morals, and for this purpose some hundred Attributes of God have been revealed to us in the Book. They do not exhaust the list of His Holy Names, but they are such attributes as we can conceive of and imitate. We have also been shown the way to equip ourselves with them, and this has been called "Law" in the Qur-án. We have been told to follow it so that we may perform here the duties of the Divine Viceroy. The religion of the Qur-án is

A DECISIVE WORD

not Legalism, as it is ironically termed by Christian critics, but a supreme code of life.

It should not be forgotten, however, that we have risen from animality, and bring with us its carnal passions by way of legacy. These hankerings, in their refined form, act as a life instinct in us and urge us to efforts for our own happiness and comfort. But if these passions remain in their inceptive form unbridled, uncontrolled, and we act as the animals do, our actions take the form of sin. In fact, almost every form of sin is an action allowable in the animal kingdom; but we belong to humanity, and we should act in a manner befitting the condition of life which is ours. Therefore, we have need of rules to regulate our actions. Of course, the breakers of the Law must be punished, but those who have not received the Law should be exempted from its penalty, as the Qur-án says (xvii. 15). But since everyone is endowed by Nature with common sense, and the rudimentary laws of morality are, as it were, imprinted on his heart, though he may not have received the revealed "Law," he will be dealt with according to the measure of the knowledge he has received, by Him Who knows the recesses of the heart.

Let everyone judge for himself whether Islam or Christianity fulfils the demands of justice and propriety.

Again, those who do good actions—which means fulfilment of the "Law"—have been told that they will receive ample rewards from their Lord (vi. 161). But for sinners no provision like that of atonement has been made. The door of repentance remains ever open to them, as I said before, and they will come under the mercy of the Lord if they make amends. But no one will bear their burden for them and no one will act as intercessor or intermediary with the Lord. Favouritism or intercession, whether in the guise of atonement or in any other form, weakens the sense of responsibility in man; and so it has not been favourably spoken of in our Book. Intercession with the Lord is doubtless allowed in very rare cases, but the intermediary, it is said, will not go against the will of the Most High (xliiii. 86-87), and will intercede only with previous sanction from Him (*ibid*).

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

To strengthen the sense of responsibility in us we have been clearly told that we shall reap what we have sown. If we do good, it is for ourselves. If we do wrong, it is upon our soul (xvii. 15). Even a tittle of good or evil shall have its requital (xcix. 7-8).

We are told that God, of His own beneficence, has given us enough material for our comfort; and it is said that nothing in heaven and on earth is vain (iii. 190). Everything has some use for our benefit (ii. 22), but we have been commanded to acquire the knowledge necessary for bringing the whole of Nature under our governance; for it has been declared that on the attainment of the necessary knowledge we shall become the Lords of Nature, and all her powers will be made obedient to us (ii. 34). In short, everything in the universe, including the sun and the other luminaries, has been created as our servants (xvi. 12); but further enlightenment and help come only to those who properly utilize the God-given gifts, and besides the necessities of life God has created every kind of comfort in this world for our use, making it lawful for us so long as we do not abuse it (vii. 32).

For every good action this reward is multiplied, but evil is recompensed only according to its own measure (vi. 161). God in no case changes our conditions (xiii. 11). His actions follow our actions like a shadow. We begin to "move," and the Divine Reward or His forgiveness or punishment follows.

I have given here the basic doctrines of the Qur-án which may act as an ethical system for the conduct of our life on earth. We know nothing of the future; all that we do is in the light of what has been revealed to us in our respective scriptures; but in the affairs of the world we can easily see that the principles laid down by the Qur-án will certainly secure us happiness, comfort, and prosperity. And we are told that the life to come is the shadow of this life, as we find everywhere in evolution. This life is a life compounded of physical, moral, and spiritual natures. We have been shown the way to subordinate our physical nature and make it subservient to the moral and spiritual order. But the life to

A DECISIVE WORD

come will be purely moral and spiritual in character, with our best morality in this life to act as a foundation.

So far as I understand the case, sin plays a most important part in both theologies. It is a heritage under Christianity, while only an acquisition in Islam, earned by breaking the Law. Sin cannot be got rid of by any good action, the Church teaches, while Islam promises us a sinless life free from diabolic control (xv. 42) if we follow its injunctions. Sin is an invincible thing, says the Church, and man is compelled to throw down his arms and seek refuge in the Grace of the Blood. Islam, on the other hand, fortifies us so that we fight manfully against the devil, and subdue him. A word more ere I conclude this chapter. Heaven in this life or in the hereafter is our birth-right under Islam which we lose by our own misdeeds; but according to Church doctrine we are born for Hell, unless we become regenerated through Jesus Christ

CHAPTER VII

MODERNISM

A NEW CREED DESIRED

THE Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, at the Birmingham Diocesan Conference, 1931, expressed a desire for a new creed, "For creeds [according to him] were not vitally infallible in both religion and science."

The tender conscience of the person wishing to be ordained is required to reconcile itself to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church at the expense both of common sense and acquired knowledge.¹ The Modernists of to-day seek to relieve such ordinants of the burden and agitate for the repudiation of everything of pagan origin now existing in Christianity.

But Modernization is not a feature peculiar to the Church of England. It has been resorted to in other religions too, and appeared over and over again in the Western Church. Islam, however, is an exception. In Islam there has never been any Modernist movement, and this for obvious reasons. The Qur-ánic tenets are not based on human traditions which so often are but the foundation of speculative theology. Such traditions often fail totally before the onset of new ideas. They are therefore modified from time to time, so as to bring them into harmony with modern thought. Old wine is put into new bottles to pander to new tastes. We pull old theology to pieces to make a new one, only to pull that to pieces in its turn after a little time. Religion from God remains unchangeable. His created things suffice to meet every newly arisen need, as they come from an Omniscient Mind. The Holy Qur-án compares speculative theology with the spider's house, which it declares to be the weakest of all houses. All animals, including man, usually make use of materials produced by Nature when building their houses. But the material used by the spider comes from her own stomach. Every gust of wind breaks the house to pieces, but the spider remains too

¹ *Islamic Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 9.

MODERNISM

busy to fashion it anew. And so it is with all religions which place man on the altar of God. They give to their theology a shape spun, as it were, from their own minds, which cannot stand the tests of days to come; modernization is then resorted to, and the faith is recast in a new mould. The Divinity of Jesus, the basis of the Church religion, has always been in the melting-pot. It received a new construction every time that each successive generation of Early Fathers tried to explain the nature of Jesus as God; and the relation existing between his flesh and the Holy Ghost. Their explanation was never a final one, but was always rejected by their successors, who in turn formulated their views in new beliefs, which in their turn had to give place to other beliefs. In short, the spirit of modernity was constantly in evidence and beliefs were constantly changing or assuming a new form. The Apostle's Creed, the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, came one after another in the attempt to satisfy the same spirit which has manifested itself so vigorously in our own time and has brought into existence the present Modernist Movement.

Though Modernism has been at work in other religions, as I have said before, yet the Church has always given it Divine sanction. In the fulfilment of a prophecy made by Jesus as to the appearance of the Spirit of Truth, it has been thought that the Holy Ghost fills the minds of the Elders in the Church whenever they meet to devise a new form for the current faith to confront a newly arisen emergency. Such might well be the case, if the revised creed was an addition to or explanation of the former creed, conforming to it in its main features. But the new creed has at times directly contradicted the old one. How, then, can both deliberations be inspired by the Holy Ghost? The thing passes human comprehension. Jesus, they say, came to crush Paganism, but his whole kingdom became heathenized by those early Christian Councils and Synods which were believed to have been filled with the Holy Ghost. The creeds so arrived at, however, remained intact for several centuries until new factors arose to impair their stability. Islam gave an impetus to knowledge and a great

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

revival of learning took place in Europe after the conquest of Constantinople. Then the fight between Science and the Church religion began. Though the latter at first tried to throttle Science by the use of every weapon of tyranny and oppression, nevertheless Science survived all her persecutions and eventually assumed the form of a foe to be reckoned with. The Church then sought a compromise with the aid of modernization, but this proved to be an impossibility. The formal religion was irreconcilable with Science. Next the clergy were asked by the laity to place reason and religion in two watertight compartments, as it were, within their breasts, and this was tried for some time, but the rapid onslaught of Science speedily rendered the position of neutrality untenable.

The Bishop of Ripon some six years ago asked Science to take a ten years' holiday in order to enable people to digest her new truths. In fact, he himself wanted breathing space to modernize the faith of the Church on new lines. But Science was more attractive, and Science prevailed. Modernists of to-day have no time for such half-measures. They began their work of reform in earnest in the days of the Great War, when the attention of the people was drawn elsewhere. Their first public conference took place in Cambridge in 1915. The subject of discussion was whether or not Jesus was the founder of the Church. The debate was opened by the Dean of St. Paul's, who in a very learned discourse negatived the proposition. Dean Inge maintained that Jesus was only the Lord of the Church which passes under his name, but not its Founder, being himself a follower of the Mosaic Dispensation. He without doubt advocated reforms which excited opposition, but he never contemplated schism of any kind. The Church received its superstructure from St. Paul, who made a Greek god of a Hebrew prophet, like Jesus. The idea was attractive to the Romans and the Greeks, and the Early Fathers in the coming few centuries incorporated the residue of paganism into a faith of Jesus. They made him the last of the Christs who had appeared from time to time in the pagan world. To cleanse Christianity from such foreign accretions the Modernists decided to meet every year, and they gradually made "a

MODERNISM

clean sweep of all those factors whereby Christianity had become heathenized." In the course of some fifteen years every pagan element was purged of the faith of Jesus, and the Formal Church is left shorn of almost all its essentials. Now they desire to do away with the existing creed and make a new one in its place. It is, no doubt, a courageous attempt, yet at the same time an effort, as it were, to snatch the work of guidance from the Divine hand. In all former Councils honest attempts were made to satisfy perturbed minds in forming the new creed, but those deliberating could not see into the future and always came to a wrong solution of the problem that, for the time being, faced them. But the ways of the Lord are different from those of men—and are unalterable. He has always been pleased to choose some individual rather than a body of men to act as His mouthpiece. Whenever such an emergency arises, He puts His words into the mouth of an individual and inspires that individual with His religion for the guidance of others. It would therefore be contrary to His methods that the Spirit of Truth should appear in the form of the Elders of the Church to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Similarly, in Nature God's laws of supply and demand do not correspond with this practice of the Church. Whenever there has been a demand for a thing, a new supply has straightway come from Him. The Law holds good in every nook and corner of Nature, and in like manner it obtains in human society in the matter of religion. Whenever any religion taught by an early Messenger has lost its purity, God has forthwith raised up a new prophet to restore it to its original beauty.

Moses was followed by generations of prophets, to meet similar emergencies. Jesus, as admitted by Dean Inge at Cambridge in 1915, came for the same purpose. His prophetic eye saw the corruption that was to creep into his teaching, and he foretold the advent of a new prophet whom he called the Spirit of Truth. The corruption was not long in coming, and it was due to the action of his own followers, who tried to win over the Gentiles to their religion.

The heresy became complete somewhere about the begin-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

ning of the sixth century, and the conditions thus developed did demand at that time Divine reform. God could not go against His own methods. He could not sleep over it for several centuries; He had always renewed His Message when the old one had become corrupted or forgotten. The Bible bears witness to this, and we see the same thing in the working of Nature. So He must send a Messenger to rebuke and root out the Heathenism thus incorporated in the Church of Jesus. The Messenger was Muhammad. It was no mere coincidence that the corruption in the Christian Church should have synchronized with the advent of the Arabian Prophet. He came and gave the lie to everything of pagan origin in the faith ascribed to Jesus.

I sum up here, in my own words, some of the conclusions arrived at by the Modernists in this connection within the last twenty years:

- (a) The Church teachings do not come from Jesus. The founders of his Church were other people.
- (b) Jesus did not teach that he and his mother were God.
- (c) Jesus was not God, in any sense of the word.
- (d) Jesus was a Messenger from God and did what other Messengers had done in their day.
- (e) God does not assume human shape, but man may achieve Divine attributes.
- (f) We are born with a perfect and pure nature.
- (g) The Bible has lost its genuineness.
- (h) The story of Jesus has been written in imitation of the pagan cult.
- (i) Heaven is not the top story of a three-storied house, as the dogmatic theology implies, but comprehends the whole universe.

I have left out some of the minor points dealt with by the Modernists, but now I will quote a few verses from the Qur-án, while the Book teems with similar teachings. It will show that the Qur-ánic Revelation has anticipated the Modernist deliberations, which have, in fact, followed it, word for word. In their zeal they have introduced Islam into Christendom.

MODERNISM

If the above teachings came in time to save humanity from the Paganism which reappeared in the Church religion, and thus to set a reasonable portion of the human race on the right path under the name of Islam (which has since extended its frontiers to the four corners of the earth), then Muhammad was decidedly a Messenger from the Most High. I would ask the Modernists to consider from this angle the claims of the Holy Prophet as a Divine guide. If Jesus, Moses, and other Hebrew patriarchs have been accepted by the Western world as Teachers from God, why should not the Teacher from Arabia receive similar recognition from them? Here I give the quotations from the Qur-án, to which I have referred:

The Story of Jesus an Imitation of Paganism. The Work of the Early Fathers.

“And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; Allah destroyed them; now they are turned away!

“They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for Lords besides Allah, and (also) the Messiah son of Mary; and they were enjoined that they should serve one God only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up (with Him).” (ix. 30, 31.)

Teachings of Jesus, that he and his mother were not God.

“Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary; and the Messiah said: O children of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust.

“Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve.” (v. 72, 73).

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

"The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away." (v. 75.)

Jesus a word, like other words of God, i.e. a creation.

"About which they differ?" (lxxviii. 3.)

"When the angels said: O Mary! surely Allah gives you good news with a word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and of those who are made near (to Allah)." (iii. 44.)

"Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto." (xviii. 109.)

No one Son of God.

"Say: He, Allah, is One.

"Allah is He on whom all depend.

"He begets not, nor is He begotten:

"And none is like Him." (cxii.)

"Such is Jesus son of Mary; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute.

"It beseems not Allah that He should take to Himself a son, glory be to Him; when He has decreed a matter He only says to it 'Be,' and it is." (xix. 34, 35.)

Jesus like other men a Spirit of God.

"When your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal from dust: and when I have made him complete and breathed into him My spirit, then fall down making obeisance to him." (xxxviii. 71, 72, see also xv. 28, 29.)

"And Mary, the daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity, so we breathed into him (Jesus) of our spirit and she accepted the truth and the words of her Lord." (lxvi. 12.)

MODERNISM

Humanity rises to Divinity.

“Receive the colour of God and who is better than God in baptizing and Him do we serve.” (ii. 138.)

Human nature is from God, therefore not sinful.

“Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know.” (xxx. 30.)

Interpolation in the Bible.

“Of those who are Jews, (they) alter words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; and you shall always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them; so pardon them and turn away; surely Allah loves those who do good (to others).” (v. 13.)

“The Jews . . . they alter the words from their places, saying: If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious; and as for him whose temptation Allah desires, you cannot control any thing for him with Allah. Those are they for whom Allah does not desire that He should purify their hearts; they shall have disgrace in this world, and they shall have a grievous chastisement in the hereafter.” (v. 41.)

Extensiveness of Heaven

“A garden (Paradise), the extensiveness of which is heaven and the earth.” (iii. 132.)

“A garden, the extensiveness is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth.” (xxi. 57.)

The Qur-ân decidedly obviates the necessity for the Modernist movement; but the ways of God are different from ours. Perhaps He will bring the benighted world to the true light by their means.

The work of the Modernists has till now been on destructive lines. The removal of the old debris is necessary before a new edifice can be raised. There are, however, one or two points in the above conclusions that have about them con-

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

structive features. In 1926 the Modernists held that human nature is perfect at its birth and not defective or sinful, as the Church believed. They also initiated another beautiful tenet that man can rise from humanity to Divinity. The second principle is, in a way, a sequel to the first. If our nature is from God, it must be capable of clothing itself in Divine attributes. It is, as I said, a sublime and grand Doctrine; but it comes from Islam and Muhammad. If Dr. Barnes renounces the old Church creed and desires a new one, he could not find a better one than that contained in the Declaration of Faith in Islam—"Lā Ilāha ila 'l-Lāh" ("There is no object of adoration other than Allah"). In adoring Allah the Muslims do not worship any effigy of God. The Qur-ān has revealed to them His beautiful Attributes and they try to follow them in their lives. This is the main idea of worship. "Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes" is a Muslim motto, given us by the Holy Prophet. It has recently dawned on some theologians in the West, as I remarked elsewhere, that the best of our morals are shadows of the Divine Attributes. But Divine "Morals" do not mean the tender things of which we read in the Sermon on the Mount; rather do they include in their significance all ethics and morals which declare themselves, in the working of Nature, as those of her Maker.

Here I will mention certain of the principles from the Qur-ān which will keep us on the right path in moulding our characters on Divine lines. They are as follows:

(a) The world is full of resources.¹ Everything in it has been created for our use and benefit.²

(b) All things in Nature follow prescribed laws.³ If we know them and observe them too, we shall bring Nature into subjection to us, since every thing in it is created for our service.⁴

(c) The whole world is in a measured order.⁵ We must know those measures to claim our mastery over Nature.

(d) Everything we need or desire is already provided. The gifts of Nature are beyond our comprehension.⁶

¹ xiv. 37.

² ii. 22; xv. 20.

³ iii. 82.

⁴ xiv. 33.

⁵ xv. 21.

⁶ xiv. 34.

MODERNISM

- (e) Everything is, by its nature, unchangeable.¹
- (f) All the Laws of Nature are unalterable.²
- (g) Things combine with each other in a fixed proportion to create new things; we must know these proportions.³
- (h) Everything is for our good, but if mishandled it becomes evil.
- (i) Labour receives its reward.⁴
- (j) Idleness brings no gain.⁵
- (k) Good actions are not wasted.⁶
- (l) Actions on right lines bring ample reward.⁷
- (m) God's blessings are open to all.⁸
- (n) Good and evil, however trifling in extent, bring their own reward.⁹
- (o) We are responsible for our actions.¹⁰
- (p) No action remains unnoticed.¹¹
- (q) God brings to light that which we conceal.¹²
- (r) Our gain and loss are the result of our actions.¹³
- (s) Our misfortunes come from ourselves.¹⁴
- (t) No one will bear our burden.¹⁵
- (u) No one stands as intermediary or intercessor between God and ourselves.¹⁶
- (v) God is quick in taking account of His creatures.¹⁷
- (w) No Divine law is unbearable.¹⁸
- (x) Wrong actions are punished, but repentance with amendment is acceptable.
- (y) Forgiveness comes to him who commits wrong through ignorance, forgetfulness or circumstances beyond his control.¹⁹
- (z) Human nature is possessed of the highest abilities, but we need Divine guidance, for want of which we sink to the lowest depths.

These are some of the general features of Qur-ánic ethics. The Book is full of such principles, and supplies us with the

¹ xxx. 30.

² lxxxvii. 2, 3.

³ i. 2.

⁴ vi. 161.

⁵ xiii. 17; iii. 179.

⁶ ii. 286.

⁷ ii. 225.

⁸ ii. 286.

⁹ lxxvii. 17; xliii. 35.

¹⁰ iii. 135; lviii. 29.

¹¹ xxx. 18; vii. 170; lvi. 12.

¹² i. 1.

¹³ iii. 115.

¹⁴ iii. 164.

¹⁵ viii. 89.

¹⁶ ii. 72.

¹⁷ xv. 17.

¹⁸ ii. 202.

¹⁹ ii. 286.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

best code of life for the building up of character. I wonder if the few principles of negative morality, most of them impracticable, of which we read in the Sermon on the Mount, could give us such a code. Before I conclude, I will add a brief résumé of Islamic principles, such as may help our friends the Modernists in the constructive work now before them.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the hereafter; (6) the measurement of good and evil; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by

MODERNISM

their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messenger-ship of Muhammad; (2) prayer; (3) fasting; (4) almsgiving; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.
—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race, and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

**PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED
LONDON AND WOKING**